

PASTORS MEMORIAL

Pastor's Memorial.

PASTOR'S MEMORIAL.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTALLATION

OF

GEORGE W. BLAGDEN, D. D.

AS PASTOR OF THE

OLD SOUTH CHURCH AND SOCIETY

IN BOSTON.

PUBLISHED FOR THE USE OF THE MEMBERS.

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COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

FROM THE CHURCH.

CHARLES STODDARD, SAMUEL H. WALLEY,

LORING LOTHROP, GEORGE F. BIGELOW.

FROM THE SOCIETY.

ZACHARIAH JELLISON, SIMON G. CHEEVER,

GEORGE HOMER, CHARLES BLAKE,

SAMUEL JOHNSON, JR.

Preliminaries.

PRELIMINARY ACTION

OF THE

CHURCH AND SOCIETY.

AT a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Old South Society, held July 1st, 1861, it was stated that the twenty-eighth of September next would complete a quarter of a century since the Installation of Rev. GEORGE W. BLAGDEN, D. D., as Pastor of the Old South Church and Society; and a suggestion was added, of the propriety of observing, in a fitting manner, so interesting an occasion.

In conformity with this suggestion, the Standing Committee appointed a sub-committee of its own number, to act in connection with such persons as the church might appoint, in making arrangements for the celebration of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Dr. Blagden's settlement.

At a meeting of the church, held the same week, a similar committee was appointed; and on the 22d of August, the joint Committee of Arrangements met, and organized by the choice of Deacon Charles Stoddard as chairman, and Dr. George F. Bigelow as secretary.

It was voted, that the celebration take place in the Old South Church, on Monday evening, September 30th.

It was also voted, that Dr. Blagden be requested to invite the six young clergymen, children of the Old South Church, to be present, and to participate in the anniversary exercises.

Exercises in the Church.

EXERCISES

IN THE

OLD SOUTH CHURCH.

ON Monday evening, September thirtieth, the time appointed for the Anniversary exercises, a large audience, composed of the members of the Old South Church and Society, and invited guests, assembled in the Old South Meeting-house.

Deacon Charles Stoddard, the Chairman of the Anniversary Committee, presided on the occasion.

The exercises were opened with prayer by Rev. William Jenks, D. D.

The following Ode was then sung, which was written for the occasion by a daughter of the Old South, formerly Miss Charlotte A. Johnson, and now wife of the Rev. James H. Means, of Dorchester:

O D E,

WRITTEN FOR THE OCCASION.

Thoughts how sacred, thoughts how tender,
Memories fraught with smiles and tears,
Throng upon us as we linger,
And review these by-gone years.

Loving hearts have here with gladness,
Pledged their mutual troth and love,
Sorrowing hearts have here been strengthened,
Taught to look from earth above.

Solemn warnings, earnest pleadings,
God has registered on high,
Here have souls oft heard the message,
"Turn, oh turn, why will ye die?"

Some who loved with us to worship,
Sweetly from their labors rest,
All earth's cares and struggles over,
They are now forever blest.

Still watch o'er and bless our Pastor,
Smooth for him each rugged way,
Nerve him for each toil and trial,
Ever be his guide and stay.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY DEACON CHARLES STODDARD.

Brethren and Friends:

I have the pleasant duty, in behalf of the Old South Church and Society, to welcome you all to the services and festivities of this occasion.

We welcome you, Sir, the Senior Pastor of this Church. For twenty-five years you have gone in and out before this people, as their Pastor and under Shepherd. For this long period you have given us instruction from the sacred word — pointed us to Christ and to heaven, and led the way. You have sympathized with your people in seasons of prosperity, and in their hours of affliction and sorrow. It is fitting at this point of time — a quarter of a century of active labor with this people completed — that we should look back together, upon the past, with gratitude to God for His goodness to you and to us, in sparing you to labor so long.

May the future of your relations to us, be blessed and fruitful as the past have been, and in a ratio greatly augmented! Cordially, heartily, do we welcome you to the sacred and pleasing associations of the hour.

We welcome you, Sir, the Associate Pastor of this Church. At our earnest solicitation, you came among us, not to lighten the load or diminish the responsibilities of your Associate, but rather to extend and enlarge the sphere of our efforts and influence as a religious society — to aid in carrying the

Gospel to the less favored of this community — and in various ways incident to the pastoral office, to help forward the work of the Lord.

Members of this Church and Congregation — the flock which here feeds and rests in green pastures — we welcome you to-night. You come to do honor to your pastor and to your pastor's Lord. You come with warm and willing hearts, to unite in this Celebration. Joyfully will you render thanks to God for the blessing of such a pastor, so long continued.

Ministers of Christ who grace this gathering by your presence — Watchmen on other Walls of Zion — we bid you welcome. You know well the cares and burdens of the pastoral office. You know, too, how those cares and burdens are lightened by words of encouragement and cheer addressed you by your people. We doubt not you will enter into the feelings of our pastor, this evening, with cordial and sympathizing hearts.

We have here this evening a band of youthful preachers nurtured in this Church, baptized at its Altar, now holding commissions under the Captain of Salvation, and doing good service as leaders in the army of Immanuel. We welcome you beloved, for Christ's sake.

There are present as invited guests, former members of this Church and Society, who have gone out from us to aid in forming and sustaining other Churches of the Lord Jesus. We welcome them on this occasion as brethren beloved. We have heard of their labors and travail, and we honor them as fellow workers in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

To all persons who are here assembled, we extend a cordial greeting. We ask not whether they belong to our fold.

As you acknowledge our Master and Lord for yours, we claim you as

> "Kindred in Christ. For his dear sake,
> A hearty welcome here receive."

We welcome here and now, the Great Master of Assemblies, in whose name we meet, and whose honor and glory we would aim at in all we say and do.

The town of Dorchester, in our vicinity, is as old a town as Boston; having been settled the same year, with a true Puritanical stock. Like us, it has a *South* Church. And I am not sure but some of the young people of Dorchester call it the *Old* South. Its pastor is a beloved son of this Church, a successful successor of the late Rev. Dr. Codman. I would introduce to you, Rev. James H. Means, of Dorchester.

ADDRESS BY REV. JAMES H. MEANS.

Mr. Chairman,—

It is with real pleasure that I come at your call, to lay down a tribute of affectionate and grateful respect at the feet of the only one whom I have ever known as my pastor.

My distinct recollections, in connection with this church, just reach back to the time of his settlement. A little boy, I then occupied a seat in yonder gallery, looking down on the strange spectacle of an installation. As was natural at that age, I was mainly intent on the scene presented to the eye; and so, while I have forgotten who preached the sermon, I remember that the pastor elect stood up in one of the pews in the broad aisle, wearing a green surtout, and that, I must confess, is about all I can recall.

But that service, which I then so lightly regarded, had for me a deeper value than I supposed. Now, other and far more sacred associations link themselves with it. The first religious conversation with my pastor in the study, in the old parsonage, when, with kind faithfulness and skill, he probed my heart as to its relations to God; his wise counsel and earnest prayer; other words spoken in the chapel—oh, how wonderfully fitted they seemed to the case and need of one anxious inquirer; then the welcome to the fellowship of this church; then, at a later period, a cordial and encouraging introduction to the work of the ministry, and constant favors since,—all these things now come rushing on my mind and make me glad to stand here, and thank God for this ministry, here established and prolonged.

And as this is a kind of family gathering, I may let my full heart speak out its thanks for another favor, the gift at this altar of a daughter of this church; "for better or worse," the pastor said, though, in my experience, it has been entirely for the better.

But personal reminiscences must not occupy a larger space. Taking a view of this ministry in its broader relations, it seems to me especially bright and beautiful as a ministry of Love. This has been its animating principle. We that have sat beneath this pulpit, have indeed listened to many a clear, powerful, intellectual development of truth; but the earnest, affectionate spirit of the preacher, as he spoke that truth in love, gave him special access to our hearts. When we differed from him in opinion, as some of us have differed in regard to questions of the day, so kind was his spirit, that we were ready to hear, and loved him none the less.

From the first we knew that he was our friend. We had seen the beaming of his eye and felt the warmth of his hand; in many a way, in our childhood, in youth, in riper years, had he shown us a quick and sympathizing heart; and therefore, because he loved us, we loved him; the ties that connected us grew stronger day by day, the varying exigencies of life giving them tone and vigor: and now that twenty-five years have passed, we are here to rejoice with him that he has been spared so long.

Had he been cold, harsh, censorious, denunciatory, it would not have been so. And, looking at the great examples of the High Priest of our profession, and of that master Apostle, who, with all his might of intellect and energy of will, was among his converts "gentle as a nurse who

cherisheth children," what higher glory is there, than for a pastor, through a ministry prolonged as this, to have been ever radiant in that grace, which, while it abideth with faith and hope, is greater than either?

During these bygone years, what a procession has been passing here. I see those gray-headed, venerable forms, who led it; there were many of them, but they have all passed on. Those middle-aged at the beginning, are the gray-haired now; and yet how many of even these, and of the younger also, all glowing with generous hope, have been called from the ranks, ere their full course was run. Our pastor may almost, like Dr. Beecher when visiting the place of his first settlement, point out to the cemetery, and say, "There are my parishioners."

But no; all are not there. Apart from the goodly number who yet remain with this congregation, many a pastor can rejoice, as I can, in the transplanted members of the Old South; in various walks of usefulness, all over the world, they are found, looking back with unfading pleasure to this honored sanctuary, and teaching us that by no counting of sermons preached and meetings attended, and no enumeration of members received and dismissed, can the influence of this ministry be traced; that it has fallen, like the sunshine of the summer, quietly, unnoticed often, but with blessed constancy, to reappear on many a scattered field, in varied fruits, the sum of which only the Lord of the husbandmen can tell.

We have a worthy representative of this church settled as pastor of a church of Christ in Salem; not Jeru-salem, though it is hoped his ministrations may lead many to the New Jerusalem. I introduce Rev. J. Henry Thayer, of Salem.

REMARKS BY REV. J. HENRY THAYER.

Of the personal reminiscences and considerations which mainly befit an occasion like the present, I regret, Sir, I have few to contribute. Many persons here, I think, do not recognize in me an Old South boy. I have never been known to them as such. It was not my privilege to grow up under those influences from the pulpit, and the Sabbath school, which produced that Eschol — that specimen cluster — which has just gladdened our eyes. To many I must be known only as a name in the printed catalogue of church-members. Previously to my connection with the church, I had been only an occasional listener to the words of wisdom uttered from this pulpit; and two months afterward I left the city, to return to it only at intervals and for a brief period.

And yet, though I have received directly but a very slight share of the instruction and pleasure which our pastor's customary ministrations afford to his attached people, it was by no stretch of courtesy, as I make bold to regard it, that your chairman has included me among those whom the Old South has given to the ministry; it is by no forced association that I habituate myself to look upon the place where Dr. Blagden preaches, as my spiritual home. He knows not,

I cannot estimate, the influence his words of instruction have exerted over me, as they have reproduced themselves in the counsels that have fallen from maternal lips. The moulding influences of a pious home are those for which I feel indebted to him in no small degree.

And I could wish that I might serve to-night to suggest a class of results proceeding from his ministry, which, because unseen for the most part, are easily forgotten. I would remind him that he has other sheep which are not of this fold. I would be a witness that there are those who feel a far deeper interest in the Old South, than its pastors or its members can possibly feel in them. Dr. Blagden may not link himself in the thought of such persons, with those occasions which dwell longest in the affections, with those scenes — hallowed in memory — that awaken incommunicable reflections; yet his name is precious to them notwithstanding.

It would be ungracious in me, however, at an ecclesiastical silver wedding, to omit to confess my indebtedness to him for a blessing of that class which the people of the *Old South* would probably claim, parishioners appreciate more than a minister. He locked the hand of one of his flock with mine in a clasp which only death can loosen.

By so doing, however, he only perpetuated his indirect influence. Indirectly does he, as a Christian minister, render many his debtors, who can hardly calculate, and seldom acknowledge, their obligation to him.

In this circumstance lies one of those peculiarities which must render twenty-five years of ministerial labor far more pleasant, in the retrospect, than a similar period spent in almost any other service. It will *bear examining*. It may

have its blighted expectations. It must be over-arched by a consciousness of shortcoming. But the many results it enfolds, only examination discovers. It comprises a multiplicity of consequences not easily summed up. It covers a manifoldness of influence of which there is little evidence on the surface. The light that has streamed from the "candlestick" is not all concentrated directly along the path over which time has carried it, but much has been refracted and can be traced only by diverging from the line of direct vision.

Connected with the indirect and transmitted influence of a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, is another peculiarity of his earthly life. That life can never become a *mere* retrospect. Its chief interest can never centre in the past. In its relation to the reclamation of this world to God, it is always more full of promise than it is of completed performance. The only *point* in ministerial life is its commencement. It consists of indefinite and progressive expansion. Every globe of fruit it matures, though the product, perhaps, of a single very little seed, contains many seeds, which shall in their turn bear fruit after *its* kind.

Our beloved father in the ministry, therefore, is not to-night like the husbandman who, at this verging winter of the year, is counting up, not without disappointment, the results of careful nurture expended upon trees from which nothing more can be expected now that the harvest is passed; but his admiring eyes may behold at the same time, and always, the bud, the blossom, the swelling germ, and fruit that has already begun to wear the sun's own hue. They that be planted in the house of the Lord shall *flourish* in

the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.

And are not the ever-enlarging results of a Christian minister's labors discernible by a vision not yet purged of sense, suggestive of the richer disclosures of the other world? What may we not expect the converse of heaven to unfold! Can we not appreciate the prominence given to the social traits in the biblical delineations of the celestial state? Surely the communion of saints with each other there, will reveal rich occasion for enlarging our conception of the wondrous working of divine grace.

May he, whose semi-jubilee we celebrate to-night, long be upheld here by that Master "who holdeth the seven stars in His right hand," and at last be so blessed as to discover that labors, imperfect in his own esteem, entitle him, in accordance with the promise, to "shine as the stars, forever and ever."

On the highest ground of the City of New York, overlooking the Hudson River, is Washington Heights. During the Revolutionary War the army of General Washington occupied this ground, and near it Fort Washington stood.

It is now the site of a Christian Church, and a young minister, a son of this Church, is its pastor.

Rev. Charles A. Stoddard, of Washington Heights, New York.

[Mr. Stoddard was prevented by illness, from being present, and a letter from him was read, which is appended.]

One of the young ministers from this Church is about to settle over a Church in Hamilton. Not *Fort* Hamilton nor *Gail* Hamilton; but simply Hamilton, in the county of Essex — named, I understand, from the eminent statesman of a former age, Alexander Hamilton. I introduce Rev. Frank H. Johnson.

REV. FRANK H. JOHNSON'S REMARKS.

We might naturally suppose that the deepest interest in the retrospect of this evening would belong to those whose memories reach farthest back. There are many here who can look over these twenty-five years, and see on the other side, even now, a distinct picture of what the Old South was in earlier days.

They can remember our Pastor as a young man, — the first impressions, — the call, — and the ordination. They can mark the many changes which have taken place, both in him and in them. They can call to mind many scenes of joy and sadness, through which he has passed with them, by which the cords of sympathy have been tightened and made more enduring.

But the pleasure does not all belong to our parents. To us, who have assembled as the children at this silver wedding, the occasion brings many bright memories of the days which have passed away.

We have, in some respects, the advantage of those whose memories are longer. Our Pastor is to us more of a positive and fixed institution than he is to them. We cannot remember when he began to be; as far back as our memories reach

he has been *The Minister*, and we have known no other. Nearly all the changes, which we can note in these years, have taken place in us, and not in him. He has always been the same; while our minds, from the first efforts of struggling babyhood, have been forming ever new conceptions of his character.

How fanciful and strange, do those early conceits now seem to us! We can hardly realize that children now, should regard their Pastor, as we regarded ours. Mystery hung upon his garments, and transformed his commonest actions into something wonderful. Mystery surrounded the pulpit in which he preached, quite as much as the long words which he uttered.

With what interest have we watched his form along this aisle till it vanished within the pulpit door! And with what curiosity have we waited for the reappearing of his head above this stately edifice! How does he get up there? What magic has accomplished the transformation in his dress? Could any common man do the same thing? We thought not. All these wonderful things were explained, by the fact that *he* was a minister. There we were willing to leave it, having approached the borders of a land where mystery abounded.

Then what vaguely exalted notions we had of his character! He was not a man, in the common sense of that word. No mere man was good; but our Minister was the very essence of goodness and benignity. Such a pleasant voice, and kind smile! It certainly had some connection with Heaven and reading the Bible. We never went so far, perhaps, as to confuse him with the Supreme Being of whom he spoke to us; but the mingled elements of divine and human, which were

woven into our conception, made certainly an angelic being of no inferior order. We should have been horror struck at the rashness of any one who could have spoken ill of him. Blasphemy, telling lies, and speaking disrespectfully of our Pastor seemed equally impious.

Years passed away before we began to regard him as a man like ourselves. It was not till that disrespectful age when the boy delights to pull down every high thing, which his more poetic infancy loved to reverence; the leveling age, when the true and the untrue go down together, and the highest wisdom seems to be, to disbelieve all that has been believed before.

Then, from the ruins, we began to rebuild, with a more discriminating estimate of his real virtues. We considered more thoughtfully his words and his actions; we approached nearer to him, and as a man, we compared him with men. We now saw clearly, many things which were before distant and confused. That which, in infancy, was expressed to us by the tones of his voice and genial smile, now took form and reality in the pure life and the words of true sympathy which came from his lips.

The actions of the man spoke deeper things to us, than the imperfect pictures of our youthful imaginations.

We have learned to love him, as one man loves another. Our hearts have been warmed, and our sympathies quickened as we have, from time to time, received an impulse from him. He has been our guide and counsellor through the most deeply interesting scenes of our lives; and we have learned his worth by personal experience.

Surely, we Children of the Old South have much to be thankful for. We have not been called upon to sunder old

ties, for the formation of new ones; we have not had to say good-bye to the friend of our youth, and pass him on to strangers, nor have we been obliged to replace our love by curiosity, as we scrutinized some new candidate for our esteem.

The word Pastor has a very different meaning to us, from that which has often been given to it in these later days. He is to us no transient visitor, who may depart before we have had time to make his acquaintance. We love to think of him, rather, as we think of the dear old family mansion, where innumerable associations cluster, and where the commonest thing gives rise to happy thoughts and tender recollections.

There are other, more serious benefits accruing from this connection, which would form a subject of still greater interest, for us all; but that is a subject too large for me to touch upon.

I can only express my conviction, that a deep debt of gratitude is owing from each one of us, who have lived under the influences of this pulpit; how deep, we shall never know, till we can look back upon our lives as completed histories, and see what they might have been under a less judicious guidance.

HYMN.

Through endless years, thou art the same,
O thou eternal God!
Ages to come shall know thy name,
And tell thy works abroad.

The strong foundations of the earth
Of old by thee were laid;
By thee the beauteous arch of heaven
With matchless skill was made.

Soon shall this goodly frame of things,
Formed by thy powerful hand,
Be like a vesture, laid aside,
And changed at thy command.

But thy perfections, all divine,
Eternal as thy days,
Through everlasting ages shine,
With undimished rays.

Our children's children, still thy care,
Shall own their father's God;
To latest times thy favor share,
And spread thy praise abroad.

REV. NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D.,

Of the Essex Street Church, Boston, being then introduced by the chairman, said that for thirty-two years Dr. Blagden and himself had been in the ministry within three miles of each other, Dr. Blagden at Salem Street Church while Dr. Adams was at Cambridge, and for the last twenty-seven years they had been together in this city. All this time had elapsed without a word or look of alienation or coldness between them; for which he took no credit, inasmuch as it was morally impossible for any one who should be intimate with Dr. Blagden to be at variance with him in feeling. He proceeded with the fullest and strongest testimony of his respect and love for Dr. Blagden; and concluded by offering him the right hand, which, more than thirty years ago he had, upon invitation, given to Dr. B. at his installation over the Salem Street Church.

ADDRESS BY REV. DR. BLAGDEN.

I well remember, Mr. Chairman, the right-hand of fellowship,— so kindly and appropriately extended to me by my friend and brother, who has just spoken, at my installation as the Pastor of the Salem Street Church, in this city, now thirty years ago. In the last sentence of it, he prayed, that when I shall, in heaven, cast my crown at the feet of the Redeemer, it may be "full of stars."

This, his tender allusion to the great end of the office of the christian ministry,— to bring souls to Jesus,—leads me, very appropriately, to speak of the true import and influence of this occasion. If it were designed and used only to honor me, personally; and if similar occasions — which have become somewhat common in the Congregational churches of the State, of late — were intended only to show attention, personally, to the pastors, with reference to whose term of service they have been appointed, —it would be a serious question whether they are desirable; and whether it would not be far better for each pastor to be silent and retired, faithfully and perseveringly, with the help of God, continuing on in his work.

But these occasions, and this occasion, have another design, besides this, their personal bearing, and are adapted to exert a wider and a better influence, than the bestowment of honor and praise on any individual. They express the conviction of the Congregational Churches and Societies respecting the value and importance of permanency in the pastoral and ministerial office. They are intended to honor the office more

than the men or the man, who may be in it. And therefore, looking at it in this light, I am prompted to thank this Church and Society,—as I heartily do,—not only for their affection and kindness to me, personally, but, in behalf of all my brethren in the pastoral office, whether in this city, or in the State at large, for such an expression of the high value they attach to the permanency of the christian ministry, and particularly of the pastoral office. It is an office which needs permanency, that it may exert its best and greatest influence, in improving the characters and continually increasing the highest usefulness, both of the Churches and their pastors.

In this view of this whole procedure, I may safely express my personal thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, for your kindness in presiding on this occasion, at the cost, I know, of the great gratification you would have enjoyed by your attendance on a very interesting and most important religious service in another city. I thank also the senior officer of our Church (the Hon. Pliny Cutler), now residing in a distant place, for favoring us, at this time, with his willing and welcome presence. I thank the committees of the Church and of the Society, whom I am happy in seeing around me, for the kindness which has led them to incur both the care and the expense of this occasion. And, if my associate pastor were present—as I see by his seat just left vacant that he is not—I should feel happy in thanking him for his welcome company at this time. I thank you all, my friends, from other religious societies in our city, and vicinity, for your kind attendance and sympathy, at this anniversary. As I thus affectionately and sincerely greet you all, I see among your number one, who in a near and dear domestic relation, as a brother, shares with me in all the tenderest memories of life. I see two

others, with whom as dear and highly valued friends, during my years of study for the ministry, I have often taken sweet counsel, and gone to the house of God in company. And I see another, in whose private residence, during my earliest ministry, weekly, for many months, I was accustomed to preach the gospel to those who were gathered in his house to hear it. In all of you, I see, and welcome, christian friends. And in doing so, I would end as I have begun, by acknowledging with you our common and supreme relations to Christ and the churches of Christ; praying, that we may all, and each, habitually hide our lives with Christ, in God;—having our conversation, or manner of life, above, where Christ sitteth, at the right hand of God;—and may unite, at last, with the redeemed around the throne, in ascribing blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever, and ever.

At the close of Dr. Blagden's address, the audience were invited to adjourn to the Music Hall for a social interview.

DOXOLOGY.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise him, all creatures here below!
Praise him above, ye heavenly host!
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

Exercises in the Hall.

EXERCISES IN THE MUSIC HALL.

ON assembling in the Music Hall, the audience found a liberal collation prepared, to which their attention was invited, after a blessing had been invoked.

When the appeals of hunger had been fully met, and order restored, Rev. A. H. Clapp, of Providence, was announced, and made a few remarks expressive of his obligations to the Old South Church and its pastor, and of his pleasant remembrances in connection with his ministrations.

Rev. J. M. Manning, the junior pastor of Old South Church, excused himself from making any extended remarks, on the ground that the day and the occasion belonged to the senior pastor, and that his own part was a silent one, except so far as it might be proper for him to express his fraternal sympathy in order that his silence might not be subjected to misconstruction.

The chairman, in behalf of the Ladies of the Old South Church and Society, presented to Dr. Blagden a massive silver pitcher, appropriately inscribed, as a token of their regard; to which Dr. Blagden responded in a few fitting remarks.

The following is the inscription upon the pitcher:

PRESENTED TO

REV. GEORGE W. BLAGDEN, D. D.

ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS SETTLEMENT OVER THE OLD SOUTH SOCIETY,

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-EIGHTH, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-ONE.

FROM THE LADIES TO THEIR BELOVED PASTOR.

Deacon Stoddard called the attention of the audience to an elaborate piece of ornamental penmanship, beautifully executed on a large sheet, and containing a synopsis of the most important events in the history of Old South. This ingenious specimen of skill was written by the venerable N. D. Gould, Esq., now in the eightieth year of his age.

Rev. WILLIAM W. DAVENPORT, of West Killingly, Connecticut, long a member of the Old South Church, was next announced.

REV. WM. W. DAVENPORT'S REMARKS.

Mr. Chairman:

This is an occasion for reminiscences. The earliest point connected with the Old South Church upon which my memory fixes, is the day of Dr. Wisner's ordination. I distinctly recollect my mother's putting on her gloves and going to attend the services of ordination, leaving me tearful, and, I fear, rebellious, because I was not allowed to go.

But how many of my recollections for many years from early childhood, connect themselves with the Old South Church! — the place of my early training; with that wing pew on the right hand of the pulpit, where I sat so many Sabbaths; and with the Sabbath school. I remember my early attendance there, — not then held in the Old South Chapel, but in the grammar schoolhouse on Fort Hill, — where Deacon Stoddard was my first teacher, though but for a short time, and he who is now the senior officer of this church — Deacon Cutler, whom I see present this evening — the superintendent. Years after, returning home from abroad, I found the present senior pastor recently installed in that office, and well remember his genial and hearty greeting.

I distinctly remember, too, the Sabbath when I sat in that same pew, listening to a discourse from his lips, and under its influence resolved that from that moment I would seek the Lord. I remember the kindness of his words of counsel the same evening, when I visited him at his house, and on other similar occasions. I remember when I stood

before that altar to enter publicly into covenant with God and with the church.

I recall, too, that series of discourses preached upon the Confession of Faith of this church, — identical with the Confession "owned and consented unto by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches" of New England, in 1680, — to which this church has held firm and steadfast for nearly two centuries, even in times when surrounded by defection. I remember those discourses upon its doctrines, as having first awakened my own mind to study them for myself; to search the word of God for their Scripture grounds and relations. Oh, how I love those doctrines!

And now I congratulate you, friends of this Church and Society, on the happy occasion which calls you together. I share in your joy. I join my thanks with yours, that God, in his "unqualified sovereignty," which is always rich in goodness to his own people, bestowed upon you, through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, this ascension gift, and that he has continued it now for a quarter of a century.

And I desire to thank the pastor for all his efforts for my good; with heartfelt gratitude for all the spiritual profiting that has come to me from his ministrations.

And I bring you, Sir, a message from my home in Connecticut. I bring you congratulations on this happy occasion, from some who listened to the sacred charge you gave me a few weeks since, when the solemn responsibilities of the pastoral office were laid upon me.

May the Head of the Church greatly prolong your ministry among this people, and greatly multiply its blessed fruits.

Deacon Stoddard said it was fitting we should hear from the present members of the Society and he would call on one of the boys of the Congregation, and one who had always been a pretty good boy, too, GEORGE HOMER, Esq., of the Standing Committee of the Old South Society.

MR. HOMER'S REMARKS.

I do not know, Mr. Chairman, why you call upon me. If it is because I happen to be a member of the Standing Committee of the Old South Society, allow me to say there are older and better men on this committee, who should have first been heard. Or if, as you intimated, it is because I have from my earliest childhood been an Old South boy, and as you were kind enough to add, a pretty good boy, then I must be permitted to say it would have been more agreeable to me, and perhaps somewhat more lenient, had you given me some little notice that I was to be called upon to speak this evening.

But, Sir, with or without notice, prepared or not prepared, I gladly answer your summons. Wherever and whenever the friends of Dr. Blagden are gathered together, I ask the privilege of being present, and so does every other member of the Standing Committee; and yet this occasion is not for the Standing Committee, and least of all for me. It is for our friend and pastor, Dr. Blagden.

I rejoice that I am permitted to be present on this most interesting occasion; and I congratulate you, my dear Pastor, that after a successful ministry of twenty-five years among us,

you are here to-night in the enjoyment of health, and surrounded by so many attached personal friends. During this long period of time, you have been "so clear in your great office," as pastor of Old South, that you have won the esteem and love, not only of your own people, but of this whole community. Your works praise you. The more we have seen of you, and the longer we have known you, the more strongly we have become attached to you. My personal relations to you during this whole period of your ministry are well-known to many here present. To the truth of all that has been said of you as a faithful and devoted pastor and a model Christian gentleman, I bear willing and grateful testimony. And yet the whole truth must be told. I believe very much of your success and usefulness as a pastor, has been owing to your excellent wife, whom we all so highly esteem.

Several of the speakers who have preceded me, have alluded to our long ecclesiastical history, to your settlement among us a quarter of a century ago, and to the great changes which have since taken place. Though comparatively a young man, my recollection extends back to the time when the beloved Huntington was our pastor; and, of course, I remember all his successors. Since my early childhood, nearly all the heads of families who occupied our pews, have passed away. Another generation now occupy their seats. "The Fathers, where are they?"

We meet here to-night to celebrate the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Dr. Blagden's ecclesiastical wedding with Old South. As a member of the committee on invitations, I am sorry to learn, that some who expected to be invited, have failed to receive tickets and are not with us on this occasion.

The committee did the best they could under the circumstances; but, in truth, there was no church or hall in the city large enough to hold one-half of Dr. Blagden's friends. Boston Common could hardly contain them all. This is the penalty a popular clergyman has to pay on such occasions. Neither myself nor my associates are responsible for this. It must be charged to the popularity of the senior pastor of Old South, and to him personally all the blame must attach. If however, my friend Dr. Blagden wishes me to share equally the responsibility with him, I shall cheerfully do so, out of personal regard.

Without consulting my associates, therefore, I invite all present, who can make it convenient, to meet twenty-five years from to-night, and unite with us in celebrating the Golden Anniversary of Dr. Blagden's union with Old South; and I especially request all who think they should have been invited here this evening, and were not, to be present on that occasion.

While assembled here, Mr. Chairman, on this pleasant anniversary, let us recall our ancient history as a religious society, and be grateful for the long line of pious and devoted pastors, with which we have been favored, and for all the ways in which the Lord has led us.

In a few years we hope to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of our organization as a religious society. What blessed memories cluster about the history of these two hundred years! God be praised for what he has done for us in the past. We have, indeed, a long historic record, of which any Christian church may well be proud.

The Old South Church was gathered in the summer of 1669, owing its origin to the difference of opinion arising

as to the union of Church and State. Our first house of worship, a simple, unpretending wooden building, was erected in 1670. Its successor, of brick, which is the one now standing, dates back to the year 1730, just one hundred years after the settlement of the town, and consequently is now one hundred and thirty-one years old.

Although neither of these edifices was marked with architectural beauty, yet what a remarkable history is connected with them both, especially our present building, which has long been known as "the Sanctuary of Freedom!"

Within her walls the voices of Warren, Otis, Adams and other "Sons of Liberty," during the Revolution, were often heard. Her beams and rafters, floor and roof, her pulpit, sounding-board and pews, echo still the inspiring sound. Her flag yet waves, "true to her revolutionary principles." The whole country knows her history by heart. We speak of Lexington and Concord, Bunker Hill and Charlestown, Faneuil Hall and Old South Church, as inseparably associated with our early revolutionary struggle for independence.

Let us then, while gratefully remembering our blessings as a church and society, remember also, our native land in this hour of her peril. Daily let us commend our beloved country to the God of our fathers. Let us pray that our admirable form of government may be sustained in its integrity; that our Union, with all its priceless blessings, may be preserved, and that this last, best hope of the world may not prove a disastrous failure.

In closing, let me say, Mr. Chairman, it was hardly fair, after so many of my clerical friends had spoken, to call upon me as the only layman of our Society, to address this large audience. Besides, just as I was ascending this platform, it

was whispered in my ear that a learned judge of our Superior Court was to follow me and close these exercises. You, therefore, sandwich me between the clergy and the judiciary. I know it is sometimes customary, as well as desirable, to have the benefit of clergy after the court has pronounced sentence. But in my case, the benefit comes before the sentence; and yet I know the kind hearted judge who is to review and close this case in behalf of Old South, will interpret the law correctly, and pass a merciful judgment.

Let us now hearken to a son of the First Church at Plymouth, the pioneer of all our New England puritan churches — from the spot hallowed forever, as first trod by our puritan forefathers.

I call upon the Hon. Thomas Russell, Judge of the Superior Court.

JUDGE RUSSELL'S REMARKS.

Life is full of contrasts. This morning, I took part in dedicating a criminal Court Room. To-night, I have been a delighted listener at your Anniversary exercises; and the natural suggestion is, that if there were more churches as faithful as the Old South, there would be less need of new court rooms.

I cannot claim to be a son of the Old South. The church of my fathers is a much older one. Nor had I the fortune, of which we have heard so much, to have married "a daughter of the Old South." But this does not prevent me from feeling my share of respect and affection for that

perfect model of a christian gentleman, whom Providence has so long permitted to act as your Pastor.

When so many of you spoke of the wives that you had received from the church, I was reminded (by contrast) of an interview between a college professor in Western Massachusetts, and a young man who brought a lump of yellowish mineral for his inspection. The professor promptly pronounced it to be iron pyrites. Observing that the young man seemed to be disappointed, the good professor asked him, whether he had been paying a high price for a gold mine. "No," said he, "I haven't risked much; I've only married the girl that's going to own the land." It is clear, that the sons of this church need not inquire into the mineral products of the lands which are to be owned by their wives. Yet, if half that we have heard is true, those who find an Old South wife, find a treasure whose price is above the price of rubies.

Your speakers have naturally dwelt upon the pleasant associations of the past twenty-five years. My thoughts, during the evening, have gone back to the early days of the country, when the Old South Church was the heart of New England, in the heroic ages of New England's history, — the heart from which were the issues of national life. Then the pulpit pleaded for freedom, when no minister had dreamed that it was wrong to preach politics; for politics were liberty and justice and right. Then, too, when Faneuil Hall was too strait to contain the thronging multitudes, they gathered in the grand old church, and from those meetings went out the most fiery pulses of national feeling. Could we gather the glowing words of the Old South pulpit, — the fiery speech of Hancock and Warren and Adams; could we

hear once more the echoes, which rang from the crowded galleries, then we should have a perfect history of American liberty.

Nor was the Old South alone in the strife for freedom. From every pulpit in New England went forth the rallying cry of "God and Liberty." New England followed her spiritual leaders to the field; and the God of our fathers blessed the prayers of his servants. The church of New England still holds her ancient faith. Still the Old South and her sister churches know how to combine loyalty to law with devotion to liberty. Still it is their creed that the worship of God does not conflict with the service of man. Their history is a perfect answer to those who deny that religion and liberty can be combined. The great Buckle, as you know, has recently issued his second volume, in which he proves that the church is a nuisance, and the clergy are a curse, because they both had an excessive and a pernicious influence on the affairs of Spain and of Scotland. In the same way, he might have shown that fire was a nuisance, by illustrations drawn from the conflagration of Moscow and the great fire in London. He and his friends would learn much by studying the annals of your church, and of its sister churches, during our Revolutionary war. They might learn there a portion of your political creed, — that liberty is never so firmly established as when it is founded in faith.

The hope has been expressed that some, who are here, may meet, twenty-five years hence, to celebrate the golden wedding, that shall commemorate the espousals of your Pastor with his church. God grant that prayer; and when you so meet in a happy and united land, with every

wandering sister returned, with every star and new stars shining peacefully on our banner,—then it shall be remembered, among the clustering glories of the Old South, that in this hour of national peril, she was true to the Union; that the country's cause was her cause; that her prayers followed the standard of America; and that the trumpet of patriotism, whether in the hands of the senior or the junior pastor, never sent forth any uncertain sound.

After the conclusion of Judge Russell's remarks, the remainder of the evening was occupied in greetings between Dr. Blagden and his many friends, who gathered about him to offer their congratulations. Many were there, who had been members of his former flocks in Brighton and in Salem Street, and who came with the old and young of his present charge, to grasp his hand and revive the pleasant associations of by-gone years. The occasion was enlivened by excellent selections of music, performed by Gilmore's band, and the happy moments passed rapidly on till half past ten o'clock, when the signal was given to close the exercises, and the audience retired.

Letters.

LETTERS.

THE following letters are a portion of those received from friends of Dr. Blagden, who were invited to be present and participate in the Anniversary Exercises, but were prevented from doing so, from various causes.

They were written in reply to the invitations issued by the Committee of Arrangements, a portion of them being addressed to the Committee, and the remainder to Dr. Blagden. It has been thought proper to embrace them in this volume, from a conviction that any record of the events of the occasion would be incomplete without them.

FROM REV. JOHN NELSON, D. D., OF LEICESTER, MASS.

LEICESTER, SEPT. 12, 1861.

Gentlemen: Accept my thanks for your kind and acceptable invitation to me to be present on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the settlement of your esteemed pastor, and my esteemed friend, the Rev. Dr. Blagden.

While my age and infirmities must prevent my complying with this invitation in the sense of being personally present with you on the 28th, I assure you, that my veneration for the long list of distinguished pastors who have ministered to the Old South Church in Boston, my knowledge of the stable position which that ancient church, and the society connected with it, have maintained amidst the changes that have taken place around it, my respect and friendship for many who *have* composed and *now* compose it, and my high appreciation of the ministerial, christian and social character of Dr. Blagden, all conspire to make the occasion to which you invite me, one of peculiar interest, and one with which I shall most cordially sympathize, though absent in the body.

That God may graciously smile, not only on the occasion, but on the Church and Society, and on the Junior Pastor, now in the freshness of his labors; and that he may sustain and greatly bless the laborer who has so faithfully borne the burden and heat of the day, and cause his ministrations to continue for more than twice twenty-five years is the sincere and fervent prayer of

JOHN NELSON.

FROM REV. RICHARD S. STORRS, D. D., OF BRAINTREE.

BRAINTREE, SEPT. 27, 1861.

Dear Brethren: Your very kind invitation to share in the approaching celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of your beloved Pastor's settlement, is most gratefully acknowledged.

I ought not to say that I regret my inability to accept it, since the providence of God, always wise and good, forecloses so great a pleasure. But the opportunity may not be unim-

proved, to assure you of the warmest congratulations, on the continuance of the sacred relation through so long a period — a relation so richly fraught with blessings from on high, for him, for you, and for the church at large.

The ministries of Huntington, Wisner, and Stearns, so familiar to the earlier recollections of my ministerial life, and so honored of God, as well as eminently useful to man, were yet comparatively short, by reason of death; and that you have now found such favor with God, as to look on the face of a pastor ever loving and active, whose ministry over a period nearly as long as that occupied by all those worthy predecessors, is surely a matter of fervent congratulation and thanksgiving; more than that, a ground of strong hope that God is about to turn the captivity of Zion, and deliver her from the grievous delusion, issuing from the Pit, that "the short ministry is the blessed one."

My personal attachment to your pastor and his family, with the whole-souled confidence felt in his ability, fidelity to conscience, and devotedness to Christ, no more requires expression here, than my undying affection to the church you represent, for having once prepared me a treasure, richer than the gold of Ophir could procure; it is enough, that his praise is in all the churches — that his record is in heaven.

Wishing you the presence and smiles of Jesus, in the hallowed and hallowing celebration before you, and praying that it may prove a precious antepast of the yet nobler celebration of your union with Christ and all his saints in the kingdom of his Father,

I remain in all truth and sincerity,

Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

R. S. STORRS.

FROM REV. BROWN EMERSON, D. D., OF SALEM.

SALEM, Sept. 27, 1861.

Dear Sir: I regret that I shall not be able to be present at the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of your settlement. It would give me great pleasure to witness the joy of yourself and people, and listen to the deserved praises, which will doubtless be showered upon you on that interesting and joyous occasion. I rejoice with you that you have been spared to see a day so full of pleasant recollections; and I hope and pray that you may remain at your post many years to come, an honored instrument of good, in preaching the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

With much esteem, your friend,

BROWN EMERSON.

FROM REV. C. A. STODDARD, OF WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, N. Y.

BOSTON, SEPT. 30, 1861.

Dear Sir: As one of those young men who have been brought up under the ministry of the present pastor, brought to Christ by his instrumentality, and now called for several years to fellowship with him in preaching the gospel, I had hoped to be with you to-night, and to say a few hearty and grateful words; but, I am prevented by illness which confines me to my bed. I cannot, however, permit the occasion to pass, without a few words. I have personal reason to bless God that twenty-five years ago, Dr. Blagden was settled at the Old South Church; and that he has continued to be its

pastor to the present time. And if there is one thing which more than any other presses upon my mind, and demands utterance to-night as I send my tribute to the shrine of this festival, it is this, That during the past twenty-five years, which have been years of change in theology and social life, the pastor of the Old South Church has been firm in his adherence to the *doctrines* and duties of religion, as they were held and taught when he was installed. Holding a prominent social, as well as a high religious station, in this community, in the midst of a growing latitudinarianism in theology, and a liberality rapidly degenerating into infidelity, the representative man of this ancient and honored church, has dared to be a *conservative* man. I mean a conservator of the sound doctrines of Calvanistic theology, a preserver of the practices of our Puritan ancestors, a defender of that philanthropy and liberty which is found in the Bible, and a determined and able opponent of all other fallacious and infidel schemes for the extension of human freedom without regard to the laws of either God or man. To take and to maintain such a position is no easy task. It requires a moral courage far higher than that which is displayed by the popular reformer. For novelty is attractive, and reform, which is often but another name for *change*, is a pleasing word to American ears.

In ancient Athens all the Athenians and strangers spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some *new thing*, and the custom is similar in our modern Athens. How strong the resolution, how fixed the principles, then, which have enabled the pastor of the Old South, for twenty-five years to preach the plain, old doctrines of the gospel, without relaxing their strictness to please friends of another

faith, or veiling them in rhetorical ornament and illustration, in order to lessen their pungency and weaken their force!

This steady, conservative course has been equally exemplified in public, and in private; in the pulpit, in the study, and in the home circle; in intercourse with men of the world, and with children of the church.

One of my earliest memories connected with the Old South, is the assembling of the children in the chapel to recite the Westminster shorter catechism to the pastor; and I remember the kind explanatory words respecting a difficult question, and the kinder words of exhortation at the close of the exercise, when all who had answered their questions, were welcomed at the pastor's house to a repast that we liked better than catechism. And I remember, too, with an interest that will never lessen, the *doctrinal sermons* which instructed my anxious soul when sin first began to burden my heart; the *searching inquiries* when I privately sought an interview with my pastor, concerning the state of my soul; and one question asked by him upon my examination for church-membership, I shall never forget, "Do you believe in the unqualified sovereignty of God?" What rest, what hope, what joy have I not found, has not every christian found, in that belief? What support, what a refuge does it afford in these troublous times!

I should not do justice to my own feelings did I fail to bear witness to the faithful pastoral care, the earnest and heartfelt sympathy, the words of wisdom, of encouragement, of counsel of which I have been the recipient, while a boy at school, and at college, and during the years of preparation, and the later years of active service in the gospel ministry. I feel now as I have felt since first I assented to our solemn

form of covenant, that I am a member of the Old South Church, and that though now a pastor myself, my pastor is the pastor of this church. Long may he continue to fill this important and responsible position, and under such guidance we may rest assured that the Old South will continue to be distinguished for sound theology, a school not only for the education of the people in the truth, as it is in Jesus, but also as it has been in the past, a seminary for the training of ministers of the word.

I am, Sir, yours very respectfully,

CHARLES A. STODDARD.

FROM REV. A. H. JOHNSON, OF MIDDLETON, MASS.

MIDDLETON, SEPT. 30th, 1861.

My Dear Pastor: That this twenty-fifth anniversary since your settlement as pastor of the Old South Church has come, is one of the pleasantest among the pleasant thoughts I have of the church of my childhood.

The fact not only recalls a happy and sacred past, but is to me a most grateful prophecy of the future. So greatly have the political questions of our day agitated the churches; so variable have been the demands of the public upon the pulpit; such versatility has been required of a successful city pastor, that I have feared lest some untoward influences should sunder the bond by which you are held over your present charge. Harassed at times by such a dread, a mournful picture of my spiritual birthplace has arisen. A congregation gathered in the Old South, of which you were no longer the spiritual teacher, has seemed like an assembly

of mourners. I should look upon it as one regards the site on which was the home of his childhood, from which the familiar house had been torn and replaced by a structure occupied by strangers. Better for him to cherish recollections of his home as it was, than to lessen the pleasing effect of such memories by realising the change. So, better for me to never see the Old South again, than to find it in the hands of a stranger. My thoughts of the church have for their centre your person and manner, and teachings. Your words and influence are very salient points in my religious experience. I recall them with undiminished pleasure and increasing gratitude. That you have remained through so many changes, and are still held so strongly in the affections of your people, reassures me that no probable event will occasion your separation from us. That you may feel it your duty and pleasure to remain many years longer the pastor of your present charge, is my hope and prayer.

I regret that the state of my health is such as to make it inexpedient for me to be present at the services this evening, to give public expression to feelings similar to those I have written.

I shall be with you in spirit, to join in the prayers that will be offered, that God may still be gracious unto you, and spare and strengthen you to minister as ably and pleasingly as in the past, to your present flock.

I am, yours affectionately,

A. H. JOHNSON.

FROM FREDERICK A. LANE, ESQ., OF NEW YORK.

44 Nassau St., New York, 13th Sept., 1861.

Charles Stoddard, Esq.

Dear Sir: I am induced to address you this note, acknowledging the receipt of the ticket to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the settlement of Dr. Blagden, both out of personal regard to yourself and an almost filial esteem for Dr. Blagden.

Twenty-five years soon turn round, and it seems but a few days since I sat in the gallery of the church, with my sisters, quite a *young* gentleman, as you may believe, listening, or rather not listening, to the services on that occasion. Not listening, I say, for I have a most vivid impression of the reproof for my uneasiness which I received from my worthy father on my return home. I remember that, when I attended the Sabbath school, you were the teacher of the Young Men's Bible Class. My own teacher was a Mr. Kimball, whom I have met once or twice since, but with whom I have not now a personal acquaintance. I can well remember with what boyish pleasure I used to hand up the singing book to good old Lieutenant Governor Armstrong when he (*venerabilis pater et auctoritatis cum dignitate*) came in to see the school and talk to us children.

Then, too, Dr. Blagden has become the more endeared to me, in that he has performed the last sad rites over my dear mother, for so many years a member of your church, and over my so recently lost brother.

Believe me, Sir, that many tender recollections come to me when I look at your invitation, and I feel that I have

not yet lost the right to be called a Boston boy and a child of the Old South Church.

With kind remembrances to yourself, and wishes that my much loved Dr. Blagden may be spared to celebrate the "*golden wedding*," as he is now about to celebrate the "silver" one,

I remain, respectfully,

FREDERICK A. LANE.

FROM PROF. AUSTIN PHELPS, D. D., OF ANDOVER.

ANDOVER, SEPT. 30, 1861.

My Dear Brother: It would be a great pleasure to me to meet you and your friends this evening, if my engagements here would permit. But a lecture this afternoon, and a meeting for which I am responsible this evening, will oblige me to remain.

You have my most hearty congratulations upon your arrival at an anniversary of so much interest, and so rare. The occasion recalls to me very vividly, the cordial welcome which you gave me when I came, a mere stripling, to the pastorate of the Pine Street Church, and the uniform kindness which I received from you, during those years of my novitiate. If I could have the ears of your people for a few moments, I should rejoice with them in your prolonged ministry among them, as being, in part, the reward of your generous and honorable interest in the ministry of your brethren. I can assure you that your juniors in the ministry have appreciated this, most highly. We have felt it the more, because the manifestation of it has been so spon-

taneous. We could always anticipate it. In any hour of trial, we knew that we could depend upon it; and we never feared an act of double dealing, or a word of double meaning.

I trust you have many years of service yet before you; and you have my best fraternal wishes for the best of blessings upon them.

Very truly yours,

AUSTIN PHELPS.

FROM REV. PROF. SHEDD, OF ANDOVER.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ANDOVER, SEPT. 11, 1861.

Gentlemen: I have received your letter inviting me to be present at the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the settlement of Rev. Dr. Blagden, on the twenty-ninth instant.

If circumstances shall permit, it will give me great pleasure to accept this invitation. But whether I shall be able or not, to mingle my congratulations personally with those who will assemble, I desire to express my profound respect and affection for Dr. Blagden, and the warmest wishes for the prosperity of the Old South Church. I but echo the general voice in saying, that your pastor has for a quarter of a century, in the sight of the churches and the ministry, given more diligence than most of us, to add to his faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. That he may be spared to celebrate his semi-cen-

tennial anniversary, with the ancient and honorable church over which he is settled, is my hearty wish and prayer.

With thanks for your invitation, I am, gentlemen,

Yours very respectfully,

WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD.

FROM RICHARD S. STORRS, JR., D. D., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

SEPTEMBER 3, 1861.

Gentlemen: It would give me very great pleasure, on every account, to attend the celebration which you propose of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the settlement of Dr. Blagden over the Old South Church. I thank you most heartily for the invitation to it, with which you have favored me, and greatly regret that my engagements are such as altogether to deny me the privilege of participating with you in the interesting services of so interesting an occasion. Twenty-five years — which constitutes, almost always, more than half of the active and public life of the most favored man — forms a period, also, never inconsiderable, and often of immeasurable importance, in the history of a society; even of one, at once so ancient and so vigorous as your own. I rejoice with you, and with your honored and beloved pastor, that during the quarter-century now closing, God has been so abundantly kind both to you and to him; that your progress in all the elements of christian prosperity and influence, has been so steady and so large; that his proclamation of the messages of Christ, and of the principles of a Scriptural Theology, has been attended with such happy results.

Hoping and praying that you and your pastor may still be

dwelling together in the unity of christian faith and praise, when yet another twenty-five years shall have been joined to the last; and repeating my thanks for your invitation, and the assurance of my regret that I cannot accept it,

I am, gentlemen, with great regard,

Your friend and brother in Christ,

R. S. STORRS, Jr.

FROM REV. A. C. THOMPSON, D. D., OF ROXBURY.

Roxbury, Sept. 30, 1861.

Dear Brother Blagden: I cannot content myself with going into Boston this evening, and, if opportunity offers, merely shake hands and say a word of congratulation. I want to make sure of letting you know how glad I am that you have reached this anniversary, and that I am alive to rejoice with you. A continuous pastorate of twenty-five years is so unusual in these times that even a stranger and one at a distance is struck by the fact; but to a friend and neighbor it has all the warm interest of a family affair. Who in our sisterhood of churches is not glad to-day? I wish I could give you back in one cheerful look and one hearty grip, as much pleasure as your genial countenance and fraternal hand have given me, these many years. You would not get over it for the rest of your life.

I do not know whether you have any enemies or any severe critics. I dare say you have not escaped the woe of having all men speak well of you. How can a minister be faithful and do that? You remember Luther's saying,— *Prædicare nihil aluid est quam derivare in se furorem mundi.*

But I have never heard you speak of detractors, if such there are; nor have I ever seen anything in your bearing but christian urbanity. Being pastor of the "Eliot Church," it is not unnatural that I should often think of the apostle, so called, whose name it bears, and that just now I should call to mind one thing that Cotton Mather says of him: "Never had any man fewer enemies than he! but once having delivered something in his ministry, which displeased one of his hearers, the man did passionately abuse him for it, and this both with speeches and with writings that reviled him. Yet it happening not long after that this man gave himself a very dangerous wound, Mr. Eliot immediately sends his wife to cure him; who did so accordingly. When the man was well he came to thank her, but she took no rewards; and this good man made him stay and eat with him, taking no notice of all the calumnies with which he had loaded him; but by this carriage he molified and conquered the stomach of his reviler."

You too have had an help-meet for you in this healing art, as well as other departments of the ministry.

With thanks to our common Master for his sustaining grace, and with fraternal affection to yourself, I remain, my dear Sir,

Very sincerely, your friend,

A. C. THOMPSON.

FROM REV. W. I. BUDDINGTON, D. D., OF BROOKLYN, N. Y.

BROOKLYN, N Y. SEPT. 27, 1861.

Gentlemen: Accept my thanks for the invitation, with which you have honored me, to attend the twenty-fifth anni-

versary of your pastor, Dr. Blagden; a pleasure I should have prized most highly, and which at one time I hoped circumstances would allow of, but the expectation of which I have been obliged at last, reluctantly to resign. It is a source of the more regret to me, that I cannot enjoy this privilege, because in addition to my high regard for your honored pastor, and the many personal ties of obligation that bind me to him in the memory of the kindness shown me in my earlier ministry, my reverence — my feelings prompt to say, if I had the right — my filial reverence for the Old South has well-nigh compelled me to break through my parochial engagements, and testify by my presence, my sympathy with your joy on this festive occasion. The relations of the Old South to our Colonial and Revolutionary, our Literary and Religious history, consecrate her in the hearts of New Englanders; her voice sounds like a mother's voice; and when we tread the aisles of her sanctuary, we seem to be returning to our Fathers' Home and ours. Long may that sacred edifice stand, unaltered by the hand of *improvement*, falsely so called! And longer yet, by far, may that Spiritual House stand, which still guards the faith of the Fathers, and which has repelled the innovation, that would alter not the superstructure alone, but the foundations even of the Church of God!

Anticipating for you a delightful re-union, as well as a hallowed and profitable commemoration, and praying for the continuance of the Divine favor upon pastor and people,

I remain,

Yours in the bonds of the Christian Fellowship,

WM. IVES BUDDINGTON.

FROM REV. HENRY M. DEXTER, PASTOR OF BERKLEY STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

BOSTON, SEPT. 14, 1861.

Dear Brother: Illness — unusual for me — which robbed me of the last half of my legitimate vacation, and has so far hindered my full resumption of regular duty, seems to make it expedient for me now to go away for a little rest and recreation. Uncertain whether my return may be seasonable enough to permit me the great pleasure of availing myself of the kind invitation of your Committee to share in the services to be held in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of your settlement over the Old South Church and Society. I write this to beg you to construe my probable absence, into no want of heartiest sympathy with the occasion. The loss will be wholly mine; but I cannot consent to be deprived of at least this expression of respect and sympathy.

As you well-know, my dear Sir, we have often differed upon questions of common concernment. I am therefore the more anxious to bear testimony to the dignified, gentlemanly and christian spirit in which those differences have ever been approached by yourself; and to express to you the great satisfaction which I have always derived from your unvarying kindness. I rejoice in the prosperity of your pastorate; in the stability of your well-earned hold upon the deep affection of your people; in their ability and anxiety to be generous to you in directions which not every church can follow for their pastor, however they may love him; and in the pleasant prospect of beginning so kindly another quarter-century's work. That you may be spared, if not to see its end, at

least to reap many of its harvest-sheaves, and may find each year of work and of care more rewarding than its predecessor; that you may have the unspeakable privilege of seeing the church whose affairs take shape from your counsel, ever more and more faithful, useful and successful; that your home may ever be bright with the light of love, and sweet with the peace of Christ; and that when "the end cometh," it may be "with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" this is the prayer of

Your affectionate Brother,

HENRY MARTYN DEXTER.

FROM REV. S. H. RIDDEL, D. D.

TAMWORTH, N. H. SEPT. 28, 1861.

Dear Sir: Permit me gratefully to acknowledge the favor of the invitation of your Committee, to be present at the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the pastorate of Rev. Dr. Blagden with the Old South Church. I regret that indispensable engagements compel me to deny myself the pleasure of mingling with you on an occasion of so much social and spiritual interest.

A long and intimate friendship with your Senior Pastor, cordially esteemed and beloved as a classmate in Old Yale, and also at the Seminary in Andover, and in many relations of public duty in later years; and a profound reverence for the history and character of the Old South Church, with which my earliest associations of worship in Boston are connected, during the first days of the pastorate of the lamented Wisner, lead me strongly to covet the pleasure of participat-

ing in the mutual congratulations and rejoicings of this occasion. But as Providence does not place it within my power, I desire, in this manner, to tender to my beloved brother, and to the affectionate people with whom God has given him the honor and happiness to be so long united in the pastoral relation, my most fervent wishes for the perpetuity of this sacred bond, to the latest limit which their days on earth shall allow; and that its issues may be crowned with unutterable joy and rejoicings in the world to come!

I am, with sincere affection and esteem,

Yours in the fellowship of the Gospel,

SAMUEL H. RIDDEL.

FROM PROF. E. E. SALISBURY, OF NEW HAVEN, CT.

New Haven, Sept. 12, 1861.

My Dear Sir: Will you accept for the Committee, my acknowledgments for their gratifying invitation to be present at the proposed celebration, by the Old South Church, of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Blagden's settlement. Though I must deny myself the pleasure of participating in this commemoration, yet I often think of the Old South, with the interest which is natural for one brought up in that fold, and who can never quite feel that he has now no part there.

Yours respectfully,

EDWARD ELBRIDGE SALISBURY.

Commemorative Discourse.

ANNIVERSARY SERMON.

PREACHED BY

REV. DR. BLAGDEN,

SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 29, 1861.

"For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:) Shall they not teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?"—Job viii. 8, 9, 10.

IT was twenty-five years, yesterday, since, by your invitation, I became the pastor and minister of this church and society. Time has flown so swiftly, that it may be as hard for you, as it certainly is for me, to be conscious that one quarter of a century has gone since we have been thus connected with each other. But it is true. And my own heart, in unison with a practice which has become quite common in our Congregational Churches of late, and in accordance with the expressed desire of the church and society, through their

respective committees, prompts me to try, and, with the blessing of God, make some profitable improvement of the occasion, in the light of His truth.

The text affirms, generally, that the past should be our teacher in the present and for the future. It says, in the words of Bildad to Job: "Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?" And it suggests, as a reason why we should thus resort to the past for instruction and guidance, a truth, the force of which we always feel, whenever we contemplate any lengthened portion of our lives: "We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow!"

Let us, then, in applying the direction of the text, to our particular circumstances, consider:

The principal facts of our history, for the last twenty-five years:

Some reasons for receiving instructions from them, because they suggest our short-sightedness and frailty, as those who are of yesterday, and know nothing; and whose days upon earth are a shadow:

And then, some of the most important lessons they enforce, to instruct and guide us.

I. I was installed, as your pastor and minister, on the twenty-eighth of September, 1836. And it has often been a comfort and an encouragement to me, in some of the scenes through which we have since passed, that in inviting me thus to come among you, you did not ask me as a stranger. The most of you had known me, somewhat, as a pastor, succes-

sively, of two churches in your immediate neighborhood, during the whole of my ministerial life. With a general intention of preaching the gospel in a more southern part of our country, from which I came ; and on that account having provided in the terms of my first two settlements, for an eventual removal to that field of labor, I have nevertheless been kept here, in the good providence of God, and by the kind confidence of this community, and my own convictions of duty, until this time.

Before I came among you, I had been pastor of a church in Brighton for three years ; and of the Salem church in this city, for nearly six. With both the highly valued pastors of this church, who immediately preceded me — Wisner and Stearns — I had been acquainted. With the first of them, that excellent man, Dr. Wisner, I had been intimately acquainted, from the time of my arrival in this vicinity, as a student of theology. His uniform and faithful friendship to me, led to an intercourse, which often gave me, by our exchange of pulpit services, the privilege of preaching to you the gospel. After his retirement from the pastoral office, and his early and lamented death ; and during the few, short pastoral labors and long sickness and absence, leading to the resignation of his promising successor, Mr. Stearns, — I was at times invited by the officers and members of this church and society to perform ministerial services, both of a public and a domestic kind, — in seasons alike of joy and of sorrow. This led to a frequency and friendliness of intercourse with many of you, and a familiarity with some, which, connected with the knowledge I already had of this community, and with their encouraging friendliness to me, and my ministrations, led me to think it my duty to accept your call.

I did so—even in the midst of serious obstacles. Among which was a unanimous call then before me, from the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia to become its pastor; and one from the First Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn N. Y., to preach there, with a view, should it be desirable, to a future settlement; with other invitations, I need not now name, from more southern parts of the country. And to these was added an affectionate remonstrance, now on the records of this church, from that of my other pastoral charge in this city, against my leaving them.

But, the fact, known to this church, that it was a conviction of duty with me, to remove from my charge in this city, led it still to keep its invitation before me, and the promising, field of labor it opened; with this, my general conviction; together with the fanaticism of technical abolitionism, which, already making it a matter of conscience to distract the peace of churches and pastors, had begun in some degree, to trouble me, induced me to become your pastor and minister.

And now, for twenty-five years, I have continued, in an unworthy, but I hope I can say, in a sincere spirit, "witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

It is impossible to state, precisely, the number of members in the church, at the time I came among you. So many of them were absent from the city, while others, not being heads of families, were to many unknown, that their numbers could not be conveniently given. During my whole ministry, there have been admitted to the

church, on profession of their faith, two hundred and five; and by letter, from other churches, one hundred and ninety-five, making a total of four hundred. The removals by death have been one hundred and sixty-one, and by dismission to other churches one hundred and sixty-four, making a total of four hundred and thirty-seven; and there have been two cases of excommunication. Two seasons of special attention to religion have been enjoyed; the first in 1842, and the other in 1857, in connection with the remarkable revival of religious interest which then pervaded the land. In the former of these seasons, as appears from the church records, a number of heads of families, and of the baptized children of the church, were received into its communion. The number of infant baptisms recorded is one hundred and seventy-seven; of adults, forty-eight.

Besides these statistics, it will probably be interesting to you to know, that I have been called to officiate at four hundred and ten funerals — averaging the number, of sixteen yearly; and at three hundred and eighty-four marriages — averaging fifteen yearly. I have preached eleven hundred and nineteen sermons, fully written; besides very many, as is sometimes my habit, from short notes. In respect to visiting, I have promised myself, as well as others, more than I have ever been able to perform. But it has not been because I have not appreciated, and do not appreciate, more and more, the importance of the duty. A pastor, like a physician, must be acquainted with the moral constitution of the members of his flock, that he may rightly divide the word of truth. He must preach, like the first disciples, not only publicly, but from house to

house. He must cherish the domestic virtues and relations. I have ever tried to be faithful to the sick, the destitute, and the afflicted.

While we always give to numbers their true value, and seek their influence and power on the side of truth, we ought ever to remember, that they are not all, nor even the most important, elements we should regard in promoting and estimating its influence. We are to look more hopefully, and gratefully, to the *qualities of character* in those who embrace it. And we are to look to the degree of purity and intelligence with which the truth itself is received by them, and applied to the various callings, relations, and events of life — religious, political, social, domestic, personal. It is when I take this view, and remember also that the real influence and extent of religious and moral causes can never be fully known in this world; and when I am allowed to hope that I may have been, under God, the means of leading some of those who have been under my ministry to Jesus, and of establishing others, who already believed, in the faith, — it is then, that with all my conscious and confessed unworthiness, before God and man, I am encouraged to hope, and to believe, that my ministry among you, for this quarter of a century of years, has not been wholly useless; that I have not labored in vain, nor spent my strength for naught.

Let us turn, then, from these statistics in figures, to some of the statistics of facts; less striking, perhaps, and of an incidental kind, but not less important and efficacious.

1. One of the most pleasing of these is, that five young men, who have joined our church during this period, have

become preachers of the gospel. Three of them are already pastors of churches in this, their native State; one of a church in the city of New York; and the other, having recently accepted an invitation to become one in this State, is about to be ordained. Besides these, it should be noticed, that one, formerly an officer of the church, left the profession of the law to engage in the work of the ministry, and his early and lamented death alone prevented him from becoming a faithful and useful preacher; while only the last month, another of the baptized children of the church, who united with it early in my ministry, and continued in it for many years, until removal from us required him to be connected with a church in another city, has been ordained as pastor in a neighboring State: making seven, who have gone out from us, during the last twenty-five years, as preachers of the gospel. Nor will it seem either inappropriate, or unadvisable, to any one who properly esteems the great influence of woman in advancing the gospel, to say, that several of the daughters of our church have become, as wives, the helpers of those who are engaged in this work of the ministry. But, it would be a very mistaken and contracted view of the best influences that operate in advancing the cause of the Redeemer on earth, to confine ourselves only to the ministry. Many, in other professions and employments, have, in their spheres of duty, done, at least, equally as much in promoting His cause.

The influence of the pastor of any church depends, in a very great degree, on the aid and coöperation of laymen. Undoubtedly, no pastor should allow himself to depend too much on them. And without controversy, true piety and talent in the ministry, must and shall be ever felt in their

power, and be at last acknowledged to exist, even by enemies themselves; somewhat as the Roman soldier said beneath the cross of Jesus, "Truly this was a righteous man;" and as surely as the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. But, while this is true, it is also a fact, that the lukewarmness, or the opposition, of lay members of a church and society can, for years, weaken the best efforts of a faithful pastor and preacher of the gospel. While, on the other hand, it is true, that in the enjoyment of the coöperation and aid of such men, weakness itself can be made strong. So deeply was the Apostle Paul himself convinced of the truth of these sentiments, that, while no servant of the Lord has ever been more bold and independent than he in laboring for his Master's cause, no one has been ever more ready and clear in affirming that opposition and coldness could greatly retard his labors, and help and sympathy greatly lighten and promote them. Hence, we find in his epistles the strongest affirmations of his supreme dependence upon God only, and of prevalent trust in Him alone, mingled with the most tender expressions of gratitude towards the disciples who assisted him, and the most solemn expressions of disapprobation, and of blame even, towards those who had opposed him, and the cause he ever strove to advance.

I may here most appropriately allude, in the order of nature — though not strictly in the order of time — to the support I have received, in some trying parts of my ministry, from the great majority of this church and society. In 1845, nearly nine years after my settlement, I received a communication from an officer of the church, requesting me to ask a dismission from my pastoral charge.

Although it did not profess to be official, yet as it came from such a source, I felt that it ought not to be passed without notice. And, after consultation, I immediately caused printed notices to be sent to every male member of the church, asking in my own name, a meeting on the following week for business of special importance to the church and pastor. I met with them, the author of the communication being present, and read the paper I had received, with my own explanations respecting the points that it presented, requesting them to act as they might think their duty to Christ and His church required, and then retired. The return made to me, and now on record, was, that only one voted for my resignation. I also received, at that time, a paper, signed by a large portion of the society, not members of the church, urging me to remain. Many of these had, at the time I received my call to the pastoral office, nine years before, addressed to me a joint letter, urging me to come among them. After prayerful consideration, and consultation with members of this church and society, and with members, also, of other churches, to some of whom I had sustained the relation of pastor for several years, I felt it to be my duty to remain where the providence of God had placed me. I knew that I should labor under disadvantages, as every pastor knows how easily a few disaffected parishioners can cripple his best efforts. But, I felt, that in every sense, they who were for me, were more than they who were against me. And I would here gratefully acknowledge to God, and to you, their unwaivering faithfulness, co-operation and sustaining aid and encouragement, during the many years which have passed since that severe and well-remembered trial. Every true disciple of Christ, therefore, of whatever pro-

fession in life, must, as he abides with God in his calling, whatever it may be, do much in his appropriate sphere of duty, for the advancement or hindrance of His cause on earth.

Among other forms in which this cause has been advanced by the members of this church and society, one is, that of giving aid to societies of benevolent men, composed mainly of members of the churches, and guided by them, for doing good unto all men, as they had opportunity, in the form of preaching the gospel in heathen nations, and in destitute parts of our own country; and as subordinate to this, aiding young men in preparing for the christian ministry, promoting the dissemination of religious books and tracts, encouraging the establishment of Theological Seminaries, Colleges, and other means of good learning, and advancing other efforts for the renovation, purification, and elevation of human society. For such purposes as these, there has been contributed by this church and society, in the last twenty-five years, as appears by statements obtained, by the kindness of the clerk of our church, Dr. G. F. Bigelow, from the Treasurers of the several societies named:

To the American and Foreign Christian Union, from the year 1851 to the present year,	$1,200 19
Am. Bible Society, from 1842 to present year,	1,634 22
To Seaman's Friend Society from 1836,	4,622 10
American Education Society from 1836,	5,862 15
American Tract Society from 1836,	5,516 01
Including legacies of $500 from M. C. Walley, $200 from Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchell, and $200 from James Blake,	

Am. Home Missionary Society from 1836,	$15,533 62
To City Missions, from 1836,	19,287 04
For Foreign Missions from 1836,	78,994 74
Total,	$132,650 07

This may be safely said to be within the true amounts contributed to the several objects, and not including many liberal donations by individuals in our society, to the same purposes.

2. It is also an occasion for gratitude and joy, that this church, during the time of my pastorate, has been true to the doctrinal belief of the fathers of New England, as expressed in our confession of faith. In the first of a series of discourses, preached in the years 1847 and 1848, in which every doctrine named in our confession was, I trust, honestly, though very unworthily, explained and enforced; a clear distinction was made between a creed, which it was said should always be as simple as possible, and contain only the doctrines of the gospel which are essential to salvation, admitting thus of a free and full communion and fellowship with all churches of whatever name, who embrace the same truth; and what we usually call a confession of faith, which it was also said, ought to be considered rather in the light of a manual of instruction for the members of a particular church, or a community of churches, and being mutually embraced by them, forms a profitable theme for constant study and growth in the knowledge of the truth; while it at the same time permits and cherishes a catholic and liberal spirit and practice towards all who profess and call themselves christians. On these principles, without being bigoted, we ought to

be ever faithful to the great doctines of the Bible, and of the reformation of the church, in the times of Luther, Calvin, Zwingle and Knox. By the help of God, we have been thus faithful. And in respect to these great truths, and especially in regard to the one essential doctrine of the gospel, declared by of one these reformers to be the test of a falling or a rising church — that of justification by faith alone — with its affiliated truths; I hope that I may say, "I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God." The statement of this, and other doctrines of religion, in our Confession of Faith, with the modification of only a few forms of expression, not altering the doctrine stated, but only expressing it in words adapted to save it from a needless and unjust perversion, to which it has, in this community, been continually exposed, I am more ready to reiterate and affirm, as my own belief, than I was at the time when I did it, on first entering on the duties of my pastoral charge. Advancing years, and longer observation and experience, have served only to produce in me a deeper, and I trust a more intelligent conviction of the truth of the great doctrines of what has been often called the reformed religion, as taught and enforced by Luther and Calvin; while the same causes have made me more charitable to other men and sects who differ from us; and more desirous of affectionately aiding them, proportionably to my poor ability, in searching after the truth, as it is in Jesus. Particularly would I say here, that advancing age and experience, have made me desire, increasingly, to reduce the essentials of true religion to their simplest elements: and to preach the blessed gospel with the simplicity, not of negligence and ignorance, but with the simplicity which is always produced by true knowledge, guiding a heartfelt zeal. One reason

of this, my growing attachment and adherence to these great doctrines of which I have spoken, is, their vital and most important connection with all the essential interests of practical life: and especially their connection with the whole process of renewing and purifying human society, whether in church or state, in the institution and advancement of what are often called moral reforms.

3. This leads to the notice of another fact in our mutual history as a society and pastor. It is that the truths inherent in these great doctrines have been habitually applied by me to the promotion of all outward reforms in the habits and relations of society.

The views we form and cherish respecting the nature and exceeding evil of sin, and the means of reformation and deliverance from its power and its curse, as revealed in the doctrines of the atonement, and of regeneration by the Holy Spirit of God; with the mysterious, but just and good, sovereignty of God, in having mercy on whom He will have mercy, and hardening whom He will;—these views and doctrines of the gospel are not, as many have supposed and affirmed them to be, mere cold and abstract theories, having no connection with the practical duties and acts of men in reforming and purifying and elevating human society. On the contrary, they are most intimately and essentially connected with the whole course of thought, and word, and action among men in instituting and conducting reforms. They are the elements which give impulse and power to the car of human improvement; as the fuel, the fire, and the steam send the engine on its way!

If we believe, and act on, the truth of the doctrine of the

fallen and lost state of man by nature; of the need of the sufferings and death of Jesus, the just for the unjust, to bring him unto God; of the necessity of every man's being born again of water and of the Spirit, that he may see the kingdom of God; and of the wise, good, and always just sovereignty of God in the bestowment and withdrawal of these influences of his spirit, and in his government, in providence, as well as grace; the heartfelt reception of these great and essential truths must and will affect and influence our whole course of thought, word, and act in promoting the purification and elevation of ourselves and others, as members of human society. If we admit and act on these truths, then as they teach, beyond all reasonable controversy, that the great source of all outward evils is to be traced to the fountain, to which Jesus traced them, and which our own experience and observation affirms it to be, the heart of man; then we shall place our supreme dependence in all our efforts for the renewal and reformation of man — either as a race, a nation, or as an individual — not so much in any outward change in his habits or his relations, as on the renewal and the purification of his heart itself. And then this heart, as the great source of all that is good or evil in outward things, must and will, as it shall become pure, either change or modify all that may be outward and subordinate. It will not neglect what is outward; it will not fail to demand, in all proper ways, that the outward shall be regulated by the requirements of inward and spiritual truth; it will not fail zealously to require and promote outward duties and reformations subordinately to the truth received into the heart. But it will never practically elevate, in its efforts after any kind of reform, the

outward above the inward, or what is formal above that which is spiritual.

An undue attention to the outward element only in reforms, has, in my apprehension, been the one great error of many churches and members of the churches, and above all, ministers of the gospel, during the last quarter of a century in this country. It has therefore seemed to me an imperative duty affectionately, yet faithfully, to warn you, in many of my discourses, against this very dangerous error. In the beginning of what may be called the temperance, and especially of the anti-slavery reforms, my own sympathies and habits of thought, in common with those of most of my brethren in the ministry and members of our churches, were on the side of the most zealous reformers, and in favor of the most strenuous and uncompromising action against what were called the sin of using intoxicating drinks, or holding any man in bondage or slavery.*

But these movements had not gone far, under the influence of these principles, before it began also to be evident to observing and thoughtful minds, who hoped and believed that they loved the truth, that the truth itself was beginning to be sacrificed by the very efforts which were made to produce those outward changes, which are only pure and permanent as they shall be produced, and pervaded, and promoted by the truth. Otherwise they become the forms only of godliness, without its power; and those who advo-

*Justice to the members of the Standing Committee, as well as to some other friends in the church and society, prompts me to say that they may differ from me in opinion respecting what is said in the remainder of this division of the subject. It is printed as expressing solely my own deep convictions of its truth, as an individual, liable to be mistaken; but believing, and therefore speaking.

cate and advance them become, like the old pharisees, as whitened sepulchres, fair indeed without, but within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Whenever men begin, respecting any practice, or any civil, social, or domestic relation of life, to call that sinful which is not necessarily and in all circumstances a crime, they must then, like the old Galatian church, which fell into this very error, though they begun in the spirit, begin to be made perfect in the flesh. They must then, in other words, begin to be wise above what is written, and to be righteous overmuch. And the result must be, what it has been, before the eyes of all of us, in this nation, and this community, for the last thirty years; that the practical influence of the great doctrine of human sinfulness, and of justification of all men as sinners before God, by faith in Christ alone, shall begin to be lost in the self-righteous denunciation of men, who are, or may be, involved in certain evils, as if they were sinners above all other sinners, because they suffered such things, while they who thus condemn them, are practically forgetful of the fact, that except *they* repent, they shall all likewise perish. This begets impatience at the slow process of the truth as it is in Jesus, in producing, like the little leaven, outward reformations in large communities of men. It produces a corresponding departure from the humbling truth of the gospel, which includes all men as alike under sin, however free some of them may be from the evils that flow from certain forms of it; and an impatience, too, of that sovereign wisdom by which God himself is pleased so to govern men in his providence, that great evils are removed only by a gradual process, as men's hearts become prepared, through their obedience to the truth, to throw them off; as the chrysalis when its growth has

prepared it, casts away its old shell, bursts into a new form of existence, and soars toward heaven.

Men who are thus tempted to give an undue importance to outward changes in the habits and relations of society, without devoting their supreme and habitual efforts to the infusion of the spirit of the gospel into all habits and relations, become unwarrantably censorious, and unnecessarily irritating, towards large classes of their fellow men who are, by nature and practice, not worse than they. And then, there must necessarily follow contentions and strifes, which, instead of reforming those who are in error, drive them into the positive vindication of sins, into which they might not otherwise have been tempted, and the result may be war itself. This has been, and this is the result, in our own distracted land, at this time; either because such false measures of reform have been the direct causes of the rebellion we are striving to quell, or because they have been made plausible occasions for it, by ambitious and designing men. And while you know that I have ever spoken, and I trust acted, for the furtherance of the freedom of every slave in this land; and while I mean, by the blessing of God, to continue to do so till I die; yet you also know that I have just as clearly condemned, I trust in the spirit and in conformity with the truths of the gospel, not only that rancorous spirit we call abolitionism, but that other, on some accounts more dangerous error — because, like Satan himself, it is changed into an angel of light — which, while it may condemn abolitionism, really encourages its spirit, by admitting its first principle, that wherever the relation of master and slave exists in this world, there must be sin against God and man. And this, in the face of the fact, that Jesus himself once said of a Roman

Centurion, whom there is reason to believe, was the holder of a slave, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And in the face of the fact that an inspired apostle of Christ, repeatedly exhorts masters and slaves, who had believed, to love and treat each other as christian brethren. And in the face of the fact that the Constitution of our land recognizes the existence of slavery as an evil, which, while it hopes to remove, it does not condemn as being always a crime. And our government now is acting on these true and just principles, by declaring that it is shedding the blood of its best and bravest citizens, not for the purpose of abolishing the domestic institutions in any of the States, but for that of maintaining and enforcing the laws as they are.

The great truths of the Reformation, particularly the truth of justification by faith alone, and the affiliated doctrines of regeneration, and of the sovereignty of God, as the giver of true faith, have so direct and powerful an agency in producing a true spiritual freedom of soul, by bringing man into obedience to God, and therefore such a tendency to free him at last from all outward forms of oppression, that the genius of the gospel pays only a subordinate regard to all outward forms, whether of ecclesiastical, political or domestic government. It infuses the spirit of liberty into all forms; and this spirit, like the living one in the mysterious wheels of the prophet's vision, makes the whole machinery of life move harmoniously with the designs of its Divine originator and guide.

4. These doctrines we have been considering, in their application to the reforms of the day, must also, as they are believed with the heart, prompt the disciples of Christ, to make them known to others, proportionably to their ability.

They will thus strive, in all practicable ways to go into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature. This duty is binding on them, in proportion as they know the religious wants of their fellow men, and possess any ability to supply them. And as they are best acquainted with most of the wants of those immediately around them, they feel that they are specially debtors to them, and should, by manifestation of the truth, commend themselves to their consciences, in the sight of God.

It was in accordance with these truths and duties, that in 1845 this society felt bound to make what improvement the increasing business of the city enabled them to do, of that part of their very valuable estate on Milk Street, originally given them by the will of Madam Norton, the pious widow of a minister of the gospel, and on which the two parsonages of their former associate pastors had been erected. Accordingly, with the assent of the pastor — necessary according to the terms of the bequest — they determined to erect on the site of the parsonages the present large and commodious stores, named the Old South Block. This was done by a contract with parties, by whom the buildings were to be erected, and occupied, at a reasonable rent, for the space of twelve years, after which they were to revert to the full possession of the society. They did thus revert in 1857. And since then, the large addition to their income made it clear to all that their duty to Christ, as well as to themselves, made it necessary to employ their increasing means in promoting the object for which they were given.

By a new act of incorporation of the society, granted by the legislature of the Commonwealth in 1845, it was provided that the income arising from this property is to

be used "for the support of public worship, and for parochial and charitable purposes in this Commonwealth." It therefore now became a serious inquiry with the members of the society, in what form this promotion of the gospel, with their possessed means, could, in their circumstances, be most wisely and efficiently accomplished. These inquiries led to a communication, addressed to the pastor in 1851, and signed by twenty-seven of the members of the society, asking his consent to the settlement of an associate, based on reasons stated in the following words:

"The undersigned, members of the Old South Church and Society, in view of the present necessities of our growing city, the ability of our society to meet these wants, and in conformity with the ancient usages of said society, propose for your consideration the settlement of a colleague pastor in said church."

To this he replied, in letters addressed both to the church and the society, on the last day of the same year, in the following words:

"Your pastor should certainly strive with you to promote the greatest efficiency for good, of the proceeds of a property originally bequeathed by the widow of a minister of the gospel. I am ready, therefore, after a mature, and I hope prayerful, deliberation and consultation with those whom I believe to be friends of Christ, to coöperate with the church and society, if they shall desire it, in the settlement of a colleague pastor, with the expectation that there shall be included in such an arrangement an extension of plan and effort, which shall effectually meet the wants we desire to supply, and wisely and faithfully use the means with which we are entrusted. With no strong predilections for any particular

form which such an arrangement shall take, I will propose one, which is not new to my own reflections, and which I suggested to more than one of the society some two years since. One great point to be kept in mind in any plan or effort, should be, to adhere faithfully to the principles of Congregationalism, and keep the care and disposal of the property in the hands of the church and society. I have kept this principle in view in all my meditations on the subject. "No observing and thoughtful man can fail to see, whether he looks at what has occurred in other places or what is passing under our own eyes every year and month, that the tendency of the great mass of the families of our population is to retire to a distance from the centre of our city. To meet these circumstances I would propose to choose, by election or otherwise, a few of our number to be the nucleus of another church and society, with a view of opening another place of worship, in a destitute or needy part of the city, pointing eventually to the establishment of another religious society, and the erection by them of a house for the worship of God. In the meantime, and until such society is strong enough to sustain its own expenses, that this church and society pay the rent and expenses of such a place of worship. Your colleague pastors could then alternate between them, in such ways as you and they might arrange. The property entrusted to your care might still be wisely and safely managed by yourselves, with reference to these objects; the wants of young families, who already feel the inconvenience of coming to worship from a distance, would be met; and your influence and efficiency be more extended, for the good of the city. We are not without precedents for such a measure. There

are three or four churches, called "Collegiate Churches," now in the city of New York, connected with the denomination of christians, called the "Dutch Reformed," whose pastors are alternating colleague pastors, and whose means originated, if I am not mistaken, in a property like that which has been bequeathed to us, increased in value by the lapse of years. Our own form of church government, we believe to be more favorable for simplicity and efficiency of action, than theirs. Inquiry might easily be made into the past working of their plan, and we thus profit by their experience. If some such plan as I now propose, or any other, which can be shown to accomplish, with greater efficiency, the end we ask, can be adopted, I shall cordially coöperate."

Without wearying you with further details on this subject, at this time, it will be sufficient to say here, that both the church and society acted on this communication, and on the thirteenth of April following, a committee of three were appointed by the society "to wait on the pastor and present to him an attested copy of a vote passed unanimously at that meeting, as follows:"

Voted, That a committee of three be appointed to wait on the pastor and inform him that the society have acted upon his communication to them, and have agreed to the settlement of a colleague pastor, with a view to give the offers of the gospel to the less favored of our city, at such time as the parish may think our resources will justify the measure to open a place of worship, where preaching could be maintained on the Sabbath, and also to the establishment of Sabbath evening lectures in our own church during the winter months of each year."

For various reasons, the act thus contemplated was not

carried into effect for several years. And at the annual meeting of the pew proprietors, held on the 8th of April, 1856, the pastor addressed to them a communication, saying, "It has seemed to me desirable, that we should begin early in the current season, to make arrangements for giving as much efficiency and extent as we can to our religious services for the next fall and winter. Such arrangements will not only promote our present highest good, by increasing our activity, and leading to positive efforts for the best welfare of our city, but they will be likely to prepare us to devise and execute, in the best way, those more permanent plans we may desire to carry out, when our increasing income shall give us more ability." For these reasons he recommended the engagement of some faithful and popular preacher, who might conduct one of the services on the Sabbath day, and the renting of a building, in which an extra service might be conducted on the evenings of the Sabbath. And he added, that with the blessing of God, another religious society might be gathered, and a church formed, to exert the best influences in this community in future time. This communication was referred by the proprietors to a committee, consisting of the officers of the church, and to Messrs. Sampson and Homer, as representing the society, who, without delay, made arrangements to carry out the recommendations. The Rev. Prof. Park, of Andover, was engaged to conduct one of the services on the Lord's day in the Old South; the chapel in South Street was secured for the service on the evenings of that day; and the pastor held the first service in the chapel on the evening of the 16th of November, 1856. In pursuing the same general plan, the Rev. Jacob M. Manning was installed as associate pastor on the 11th of March, 1857. It is enough

to add, that these efforts have resulted in the erection of a commodious chapel in Chambers Street, where regular worship is conducted, alternately, by each pastor. It was dedicated, by religious services, on the evening of the first Sabbath of the current month; and the details of other means of grace, in connection with it, besides the preaching of the gospel, were given in an interesting address, then made by Mr. Lothrop, who is employed by the society as their agent in directing and using them.

We may cherish the strong and reasonable hope, that this act is the beginning of a series of measures which will attain the object designed and specified by the giver of our funds more effectually than any other means. It insures the preaching of the gospel to the poor as well as to the rich; and it bids fair to establish, for this purpose, a permanent body of believers, united in church fellowship, to be a pillar and ground of the truth from generation to generation. The only plan, other than this, which has, to my knowledge, been seriously suggested, will not, I think, promote the end in view so certainly and happily. The institution of a series of lectures on important religious subjects, by gifted men — which is the suggestion alluded to — would undoubtedly for a season excite much attention, and might do for a time much good. But it would not so directly preach the pure gospel to all classes. It would not, if we judge from the teachings of experience in similar courses of lectures, like those, for example, called the Price Lectures, in another part of the Christian church, in our city, continue to sustain a deep interest in the community for a length of time. It would be liable to the dangers of continual applications, and possible favoritism in the selec-

tion of lecturers. And above all, it would fail to form and sustain christian churches, to be ever replenished with new and active members, and so be a perennial source of streams of direct religious influences and christian charities, to flow on in future generations and make glad the city of our God.

5. Before closing this glance at the past, there is yet another kind of means we shall faithfully use, under the influence of the truths of the gospel, of which something ought to be said. I allude to preachers and preaching.

It pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. And this means of good can never be either wisely or innocently disregarded by his true servants. And in the commendation of the truth to every man's conscience, in his sight, every kind of gift, in preaching, should be sedulously and perseveringly employed.

The doctrines, or truths, of which we have been speaking, received into the heart and influencing the life, will prompt the disciples of the Saviour so to employ them as to rely, in their use, much more on the power of God than on the agency of man. They will feel the force of the declaration of Paul to the members of the church in Corinth, many of whom had been tempted to despise even him in their new attachment to other preachers, when he said: "Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the

increase. So then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase." He did not mean by this, that the particular gifts—whether of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas—in their application to various persons, and times, and circumstances, were not to be desired, and sought, and wisely used. But he did mean that they were ever to be so used as to be practically subjected to that supreme regard, in which the power of God, and the manifestation of his truth in the acts and characters as well as in the words of his preachers, are ever to be held. They are to be so used, that we shall not run needlessly into the danger mentioned by the same zealous, yet wise apostle, when, in exhorting his son Timothy to preach the word, and be instant in season and out of season, he assured him that the time would come when men would not endure sound doctrine, but would, after their own lusts, heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.

It is this danger—not an imaginary one—which has ever made the act of introducing what are usually called "evangelists" among churches and societies, where there are settled pastors, one of the most trying and difficult they are called to perform. An act, the more trying and difficult, because no pastor, who knows his own heart, or who has much knowledge of human nature in others, will fail to feel that he may be specially liable to be swayed by selfish motives, whether he invites, or refrains from inviting, the aid of such labors. By inviting them, he may be unfaithfully casting on others, responsibilities and duties, which he ought to bear, and to perform; and be thus doing, what Paul would not do, building on another man's foundation. While, if he does

not invite them, he makes himself liable to the imputation, which many may be too willing quickly to suggest, that he is selfishly unwilling to rejoice in, and aid the influence, and the gifts of other men.

This difficulty, many of you know, has once, in the course of the last twenty-five years, troubled, to some extent, the churches and pastors of this city. It troubled Paul at Corinth. It troubled the pastors of this church, and of the other churches in this city, immediately after the powerful preaching of Whitefield, when as the fact is related in a note to the historical sermons of Dr. Wisner (pp. 103–104,) "the mind of many were directed from being concerned about their own conversion, to think and dispute about the care of others." This will probably ever be one of the trials, which must be met by the most faithful churches and pastors in future times. All that I can say is, that when such times arrive, they must be met with all the christian love and wisdom, and prayer, that can be exercised by the people of God, whether they are the pastors, or the members of the churches. Once, in the course of my ministry among you, after having done all in my power to express ministerial and personal sympathy towards one called an evangelist, by repeatedly inviting his services in our pulpit, on several evenings of the Sabbath, and on the Sabbath day, I was asked, not officially by the church, but informally, by a private person, in behalf of the young men, I knew not how many, or how few; to invite the continued exercise of his labors. Under the circumstances, I felt it to be my duty to decline. And I am ready, to-day, humbly to rely on the developments of the providence of God, for the correctness of the decision. In my judgment, the continued labors of

evangelists, where there are already settled pastors, who can, and do, avail themselves, for the good of their flocks, of the gifts of their brethren, by exchanges, and otherwise, are, as a general rule, undesirable, and detrimental to the highest and permanent good of the churches.

There is one change of a material kind, made within the last five years, which ought to be noticed here, mainly because the commodious and venerable house in which we worship is hallowed in our minds, and in the minds of our fellow citizens, by so many interesting associations. I allude to the improvements made in its interior in the year 1857, by lessening the width of the upper galleries, and the lowering and alteration of the pulpit. This, with the exception of the semi-circular part in front of the preacher, is entirely new; and it is the third one erected since the building of the house, in 1729. The first was what is commonly called a tub pulpit. The second was built in 1808, and presented to the society by Deacon William Phillips, and was lower than the first one. This last, and third one, brings the preacher still nearer to the people, and is, on other accounts, more convenient than the others.

Nor should we fail to notice, that the truths of which we have spoken were, we have reason to hope, and certainly ought to be always, the rule by which we should be guided in all such changes. We are to venerate the past, and preserve and cherish its hallowed associations. But not so to venerate it, as to fail in the greatest efficiency of which we are capable in advancing religious truth. Our immutability should, like that of God himself, be, in respect to all things outward and material, the pivot of perpetual

change, because it "turns upon the poles of truth." It was on this principle that Jesus himself said to the Jews, as they admired, from the Mount of Olives, the grandeur of their temple, there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And this was the essential lesson he taught the woman of Samaria, respecting places of worship, when he said: "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." "God is a spirit: and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

It was while these improvements were being made, and immediately after the associate pastor had been installed, that I was enabled, by your kindness, to spend six months in a visit to Europe, and look on the graves of my immediate ancestors in England, and be instructed and refreshed by the scenery and manners of other lands.

II. The text suggests as reasons for our thus consulting the past, two considerations we may well heed, after the view we have now taken.

1. The *first* is our ignorance; "we are of yesterday, and know nothing." The *second* our fleeting mortality; "our days on earth are a shadow." It is like the pathetic exclamation of Job himself, respecting man, in the 14th chapter; "He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." And like that of David respecting himself in the 109th Psalm; "I am gone like a shadow when it declineth."

The point presented by both expressions is, that we, being thus ignorant and mortal, cannot either obtain for ourselves, or give to those who come after us, good and useful instruction,

except by consulting and studying the past, in its connection with the present and the future. For, we feel and think and act in the present, under the influence of mixed motives, which are partly, and, possibly, wholly selfish; or only in a degree, and often, alas! in a slight degree, benevolent and disinterested. We need, therefore, to place present scenes, and persons, and interests, as far away from us, as we may; or rather look at them in the solemn light which comes from the past, so as to make them as much as possible, historical. This, the study of former days, even though not far distant, enables us, in some degree, to do. Thus:

> "'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
> And ask them what report they bear to heaven."

In doing so, we often, if not always, find that under the influence of undue desires after particular ends, we have not known our own hearts, nor been aware of the degree to which we have been swayed by unworthy and sinful motives. We thus learn what was in our hearts, and are ready to admit, in all its fulness, the truth of the declaration of Solomon: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." This is adapted to humble us, and to lead us fervently to pray to God to search us, and know our hearts; to try us, and know our thoughts, and to see if there be any wicked way in us, and to lead us in the way everlasting. It prompts us to implore the forgiveness of our past sins and errors, and to seek His guidance and wisdom, in the future. It makes the experience of the past, our best instructor. Hence the direction of God, given by Moses to his ancient people: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the

wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no." As we thus "inquire of the former age," we find that we have been in many things, morally ignorant of ourselves, and of others; particularly, it may be, of our own motives. In youthful ardor, or ambition, or inexperience, we may have committed errors. And we learn the need and the propriety of the prayer: "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy remember Thou me, for Thy goodness sake, O Lord!" We learn also that we have made mistakes respecting ourselves, and respecting others. We learn to appreciate more highly, characters of which we once thought too slightingly. And here, allow me to say, in passing, that I have thus learned to appreciate more highly, the longer I have been with you, the character and acts of my kind and excellent friend, and your faithful pastor and minister, the late Dr. Wisner.

We learn, also, by such inquiries into departed years, that we are "compassed with infirmities," both of a moral and intellectual, as well as of a bodily kind. And that we need heavenly wisdom to direct us, whether as a community, or private persons, in all the course of life; and should acknowledge God in all our ways, that He may direct our path. For "we are of yesterday, and know nothing." As we "are of yesterday," and therefore "ignorant," the consultation of the past, may be said to guide us on our way, by the teachings of the persons and events that have gone before, as the blazed trees of the forest indicate to the untutored savage the way in which he should go.

2. We are also mortal, as well as ignorant. "Our days on earth are a shadow," and therefore we should "inquire of the former age." This our mortality is strikingly shown by the changes which have occurred since we have been together as minister and people. Two of those who were officers of our church when I came to you, have gone to their rest. Each of them died very suddenly. The one, just after he had gone, in the morning, from his home and family to engage in the duties of the day; the other, just after his return, in the early evening, to his home and family after the duties of the day were done. Others, whom many of us well knew, have gone hence to be here no more. Gray heads, which were before me and on either side of me when I first spoke to you as a pastor, now lie low amid the clods of the valley. It would be a sad satisfaction to me to name them in your hearing, did not our time and circumstances forbid.

"With us their names shall live
Through long succeeding years,
Embalmed with all our hearts can give,
Our praises and our tears."

Hardly is there a family among you, at the funeral of some one of whose members I have not been called to officiate. Instead of the fathers, have come up the children. And already I begin to minister in the midst of a second generation. But not, I am glad to say, not a generation which knows not Joseph. For, not a few of you know me as the minister by whom your parents dedicated you to God in baptism, and by whom you have been united in marriage. I have also baptized children's children. Among all of you,

the younger part of the church and congregation, I have found, and do find, the affectionate confidence of young hearts! But many of us, my friends, in our own persons, as well as in our congregation and our families, are reminded that "our days on earth are a shadow." From many, I may almost say, from the most of us, certainly from all of those to whom I can say, "ye are they who were with me from the beginning," the freshness and elasticity of young life are beginning to depart, and "the night cometh." In the graphic metaphor of the preacher, in describing the tokens of age: "The grinders cease, because they are few; and those that look out of the windows" are "darkened."

This, our fleeting mortality, is a reason for rightly consulting departed years. It will prompt us, as we do so, to repent of what has been wrong; and to do works meet for repentance. It will urge us to redeem the time, knowing that the days are evil; and to work while the day lasts, lest darkness come upon us. It urges motives to duty by suggesting an argument for immortality, and for the rewards and retributions of a future life. There is such a disproportion between the degree and energy of the desires, the emotions, the faculties, the acts we exercise and do on earth, and the effects produced in time only, that a future state is felt to be absolutely necessary, in which the seeds of things sown here may spring up, after the winter of death, and bear fruit often for men on earth who live after us and reap the benefit of our labors, as earnests of what every word and every secret thing shall bring forth, after the judgment, in the sunlight of eternity! "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption;

but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." We feel the need of a future state, as we thus look back, in which the acts of the present may be rewarded or punished in accordance with their true nature. The events, the efforts, the struggles, the hopes, the vicissitudes of this life, without the anticipations of retributions and results in a life to come, would indeed

> "Resemble ocean into tempest tossed,
> To waft a feather or to drown a fly!"

How little comparative influence even the greatest and best individual can exert on earth alone, if we do not consider also the result of his efforts here in their bearings on an immortal existence! Our fleeting mortality, therefore, is a reason for learning from the former days, because this prompts us to do works and exert influences which shall endure forever. For "the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." The cup of cold water, given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose its reward. Jesus has declared that acts, the nature of which was not apprehended by their agents, at the time of their performance in this life, but were yet done from a genuine love to God and man, shall be brought to light by Himself, and shall be graciously, and eternally rewarded to the astonishment and joy of those who did them. When such shall say to Him, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee?" He shall reply, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done unto me! Enter ye into the joy of your Lord. As the harbingers, and indications of this, the good acts of good men who have gone hence, to be here no more, often loom up like stars above the

horizon of forgetfulness, even in this world, and indicate that they shall shine forever and ever; thus making our very mortality a reason for studying the past, to learn the blessedness of holy action, in the present and the future; and know the value of the seed of truth, as we see its buddings in time, prospective of its blossoms and fruit in eternity! As the votaries of natural science often so associate their names with the laws they have discovered, or, with the application they have made of them in the inventions they originated; so should we, as we look upon the developments of former days, make them so subservient to the regulation of our own conduct, in right action, that we too, by the help of God, may be remembered in connection with the developments of His blessed moral government, on earth and in heaven!

How do the acts of the pious, who have gone before us, in this church, thus live? The piety, for example of Mrs. Waters and Madam Mason, in establishing and sustaining the female prayer meeting, still continued among us by devoted women! the act of Madam Norton, whose name is inwrought into the granite which stands as a monument to her christian beneficence! the acts of Willard, in leaving his body of divinity, comprised in lectures on the Assembly's catechism, delivered first, and familiarly, to the children of his charge, and afterwards, prepared more elaborately, and delivered monthly on Tuesdays, in the afternoon; and which were heard, writes the historian, "with a great relish, by many of the most knowing and judicious persons, both from town and college;" and the act of Prince, in leaving us a library, still rich in many historical and theological works, notwithstanding the vicissitudes of time and war to which it has been exposed; and his annals, which are studied by our historians

now. And how do the examples of himself and his pious associate pastor, Sewall, shine for the benefit of future associated pastors in the fact, stated thus by Dr. Wisner: "The journals and other documents that have come down to us, lay open before us the most secret history of these men; and not a solitary instance appears of unpleasant difference of opinion, or of the slightest interruption, in any form, of confidence and affection. Is," he asks, "the cause of this uninterrupted and delightful harmony, in a situation so peculiarly liable to beget jealousy and contention, inquired for? Something is doubtless due to their remarkably amiable natural temper, and their early and intimate friendship; still more to their ardent piety; but most of all to a fact which presents itself in the journal of Sewall." He then quotes the journal, in which three instances, under different years and dates, are recorded, when they united in special prayer with reference to particular occasions in the church, and adds: "A portion of Friday afternoon before every communion, and a season preceding the transaction of any important business in the church, was habitually spent in this manner by these faithful servants of Christ; and occasionally they spent portions of a day mutually devoted to private humiliation in united prayer. Men," he then says, "who live together thus, will of course maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Even the Roman Cicero wrote, in the light of reason and nature only, of the hope of meeting his departed friends in a future state. How much more should the christian, in anticipation of the life and immortality brought to light in the gospel, look in faith to the cloud of witnesses who have gone before him, and who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises!

III. Under the conviction, then, of our ignorance and our fleeting mortality, let us consider, lastly, and as briefly as we can, some of the lessons we should learn, and act upon, drawn from the history of the last quarter of a century.

1. The first I urge is gratitude to God for sparing our unprofitable lives, and giving us, so richly, the means of blessedness in his service. The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage. His goodness, particularly in the forms of forbearance and long suffering, towards our neglect of duty, and our infirmities, and our sins, should lead us to repentance. And as we experience a godly sorrow, our sorrow should be turned into joy, as we exclaim, thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!—the gift of his Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, through whose death, the just for the unjust, and through whose ever prevailing intercession, God, our heavenly Father, can, and does, accept of a love and service so imperfect in degree as ours has been.

2. A second lesson taught by this review of the past, is our obligation to exercise christian love towards each other; particularly in the forms of patience, forbearance, forgiveness, long suffering. As imperfect men, we are, as members of the same church and society, continual occasions of a salutary trial and improvement of character to one another. There are tares among the wheat in the field of God on earth. There may even be a Judas among the twelve. We are not, therefore, to expect perfection in one another; and are to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of

Christ. We are to exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. And yet we are to be, at the same time, "kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us."

3. The last lesson I would urge as inculcated by this retrospect is, that we should feel and act under a deep and constant obligation to employ and improve our advantages; and as one means of this, we should duly regard and avoid our disadvantages.

Among our advantages, we have a history, as a church and society; we have the means of sustaining and advancing the truths and institutions of the gospel; and we have the examples of believers who have gone before us.

We have a history. Although we have been remembering a period of only twenty-five years, these have been in part the production of previous years; and we cannot duly consider them, without some reference to a history of almost two centuries of time. The very venerableness of our age gives us certain advantages, which we should correspondingly appreciate, and which impose on us corresponding obligations. This church, through this period, has been, by the help of God, true to the faith once delivered to the saints. It has been, by the help of God, "faithful among the faithless;" for others, we fear and believe, have "departed from the faith." We have had some opportunities, and we yet have them, for testing the influence of two systems of professed faith, in this community — that received and acted on by the fathers of New England, commonly called "Calvinistic;" and the one usually called, by its friends,

"Liberal Christianity," as contrasted with the other, which is affirmed to be illiberal, and harsh, and bigoted. Which of these has produced, and is producing, the best effects? Which system maintains and honors most the inspiration of the Bible? Which one exhibits the most marked tendency to reform society, without convulsing it, by attending supremely to the renewal of the hearts of men, and subordinately to the alteration of outward forms? Which one is most favorable to a genuine and universal liberty, by supremely regarding and striving for religious freedom, and trusting to the sure influence of that freedom, to produce, gradually but effectually, all other kinds of liberty, as the hearts of men become prepared for it—never putting new wine into old bottles, lest the bottles burst?

If this faith, for which we have earnestly contended, leads to activity in spreading the gospel and its institutions, and has led to it, in the forms we have noticed in this discourse, so that we have, in the last twenty-five years, contributed for such purposes upwards of one hundred and thirty thousand dollars; we should be encouraged by such effects; and should cherish a corresponding depth of obligation not to be weary in well doing, but to persevere, knowing that in due time we shall reap, if we faint not If our doctrines have, under God, thus wrought in others and in us, we should earnestly, yet with a christian liberality of views, contend for them. We should zealously, yet intelligently, adhere to them; striving, in our ways of stating them, to avoid needless repellances, of which there have existed some. As these doctrines lead us, for the sake of the truth as it is in Jesus, thus to add to their efficiency by the manner of stating and defending them, so

should they also lead us to modify, and if needful, to change the forms of material things for their more successful advancement; thus causing all our outward possessions to subserve the highest interest and influence of religious truth. And as we are of yesterday, and know nothing; and are fleeting and mortal, our days on earth being a shadow; we should seek for glory and honor and immortality in the world to come by diligence in the duties of the world that now is; striving to obtain that crown of glory which shall never fade away, and ever following the example of those who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises, and especially of Him who was "without sin," "holy, harmless, undefiled!"

The associate pastorship also gives you the advantage of more efficient means for advancing the kingdom of Christ among yourselves and others; and I desire and pray that it may insure for you a more gifted and useful pastor than I have ever been, or can be. To me, it gives an aid, the desirableness of which I already began to feel, in bearing the responsibilities of the pastoral office in a city and society like this; responsibilities, the weight of which, in all the forms, secret and open, with which they rest on any one, who watches for souls as one who must give account, do much to hinder and repress the full efficiency and force of the gifts, which may be actually possessed. It will therefore enable me, with the blessing of God, to follow, with the greater hope of diligence and success, the exhortation of Paul, to neglect not the gift which may be in me; and to make the fuller proof of my ministry, for the remainder of the time, during which it may please providence to let me serve you in the gospel. On all of us, therefore, these advantages,

with which God has blessed us, lay corresponding obligations to use and improve them faithfully.

To do thus, we should be willing to look at the disadvantages connected with our position and privileges; particularly as these may arise from the temptation to neglect a proper improvement of our blessings. For, living as we do, in a world of trial, our every position in life will be found to bear with it, its own peculiar advantages and disadvantages. And, we ought to bear continually in mind, the truth which I have often had occasion to repeat in your hearing, I trust for my own admonition as well as yours, that all means of good in this life, if perverted, become prejudicial, in a degree proportioned to their value, had they been used aright. It is on this principle that the gospel itself, when perverted, is made a savor of death; and that Jesus said of the Jews, if I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.

These disadvantages, to which I have alluded, may affect particularly yourselves, or your ministers, or be experienced mutually by both; and may, even, in some degree, influence the community in their relations to both.

You, and your ministers, may presume too much upon the history of the past; like a family which loses its energies by trusting to the reputation of its noble ancestry; and like the Jews, who said that they were Abraham's children, while they did not the works of Abraham.

You may be tempted to discourage your ministers, by neglecting active duty, and an ever sympathizing coöperation with them, in your almost unconscious reliance on the

material means of good which you possess. You may even be tempted to think of them, and act towards them, as if they were mercenaries who sought not you, but yours. The associate pastorship, which has, in a large part of its history, existed in this church, and now exists, may be the occasion of difficulty and disaster, if both pastors and people keep not their hearts with all diligence. One may say I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos.

The community around you may conceive and cherish the idea that you are wealthy, and do not need their sympathy and coöperation. And even christian men may, without sufficient reflection, discourage others from uniting with you, and even entice them away, by supposing and suggesting, that your material means give you advantages enough, without the benefit which you need still more on that account, of loving and faithful souls.

The real or supposed possession and influence of wealth are often inevitably unpopular. It is a part of the tax it may be said to be obliged to pay to society, for the influence which always attends it. And this is a safeguard to its possessors; though often a great inconvenience, and sometimes a great mortification to them.

You, yourselves, in your wish to keep your affairs safely, and in your own hands, may be tempted to let your commendable and necessary prudence degenerate into a selfish and suspicious exclusiveness, and thus prevent you from encouraging others to unite with you, and to let the blame of their absence fall on those who preach to you the gospel. It is by yielding to such temptations as these, instead of watchfully and prayerfully, in dependence upon Christ, looking them in the face, and overcoming them, that churches and societies

which have been favored in the providence of God, with what is often called "a church fund," have been almost proverbially inefficient, and nigh unto spiritual death. They fall into the temptation of the church of the Lardiceans, and are neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm; and say, we are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked.

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. We are encouraged in this persuasion, by the grace of God, in having preserved you, as a church and society, in so great a degree faithful to the trust He has committed to you, for nearly two hundred years. We are encouraged in it by the fact that you have been led in His grace and His providence, to begin to use the advantages He has given you, by "sounding out the word of the Lord" in destitute places beyond yourselves; scattering so that you shall increase; giving so it shall be given unto you. We are inclined to apply to you the principle of reasoning applied by Paul to the Philippian church, and say: "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace. For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bonds of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

"Be not high-minded, but fear." "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

I cannot close, without affectionately commending the truth as it is in Jesus, which I trust I have here preached, though in much weakness, for a quarter of a century to the consciences of all of you; and particularly to those, who, having been here, when I commenced my ministry, must now be somewhat advanced in years. Some of you have already received the truth in the love of it, as your guide for life, and your preparation for eternity. Others may still be strangers to its vital power. Let me bear my testimony again to the purifying and peace-giving power of the gospel, which brings life and immortality to light; and affectionately, and once more, my friends, commend it to you! AMEN.

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